

Ōruku Landing | Whāngārei, Northland

VISUAL, NATURAL CHARACTER, AND LANDSCAPE EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

July 2020

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Prepared for Northland
Development Corporation by

bridgetgilbert
landscape architecture

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1. Introduction

1.1 The following Visual, Natural Character and Landscape Effects Assessment has been prepared by Bridget Gilbert Landscape Architecture Limited (BGLA) for Northland Development Corporation in support of a resource consent for the following activities:

- a. Demolition of existing industrial buildings and ancillary sheds;
- b. Removal/demolition of an existing concrete boat ramp;
- c. Earthworks involving approximately 7,000m³ of cut and 1,800m³ fill;
- d. Removal of two Pōhutukawa trees located adjoining Riverside Drive, retention of the balance of the specimens along this frontage and augmentation with new pōhutukawa specimens where appropriate
- e. Construction of a public promenade (being the replaced Hātea Loop portion adjoining the site);
- f. Construction of a new private and fully serviced 29 berth marina;
- g. An electric ferry dock;
- h. Construction of a public floating boardwalk adjoining the proposed private marina;
- i. Construction of a public ferry terminal with two electric ferry vessels docks;
- j. Construction of an Entertainment Centre with the ability to facilitate large conferences, staged performances, and community functions;
- k. Staged construction of a four-star Hotel (132 Keys) including 7 retail/commercial tenancies and pool;
- l. Construction of a mixed use building incorporating 20 apartments, 4 retail units and a five-storey car parking building;
- m. New garden space between the hotel and mixed use building;
- n. New public Plaza (Ōruku Landing Plaza) and associated public realm furniture and landscaping between the proposed four-star hotel and Entertainment Centre;
- o. Mitigation planting; and
- p. A new public paddle board and kayak launching area, involving floating pontoon/boardwalk to the coastal marine area.

1.2 It is my understanding that, the proposal is a discretionary activity with respect to the Whāngārei District Council jurisdiction and a non-complying activity with respect to the Northland Regional Council. A restricted discretionary activity consent is also required with respect to the NES.

PROJECT APPROACH

1.3 The following approach was adopted in the preparation of this 'landscape' assessment:

- Preliminary briefing by project architect and planner.
- Desktop review of development proposal and relevant statutory documents (Regional and District Plan text and mapping).
- Site visit to undertake effects assessment.
- Refinement of the development proposal in discussion with the project team and client.
- Preparation of Visual, Natural Character and Landscape Effects Assessment report utilising the effects methodology outlined in **Appendix 1**.

2. Site Location and Context

LOCAL AREA

2.1 The site is located to the north east of Whāngārei Town Centre on the northern side of the Hātea River, some 350m (as the crow flies) from the Whāngārei Town Basin (Te Ahipupurangi-a-ihenga).

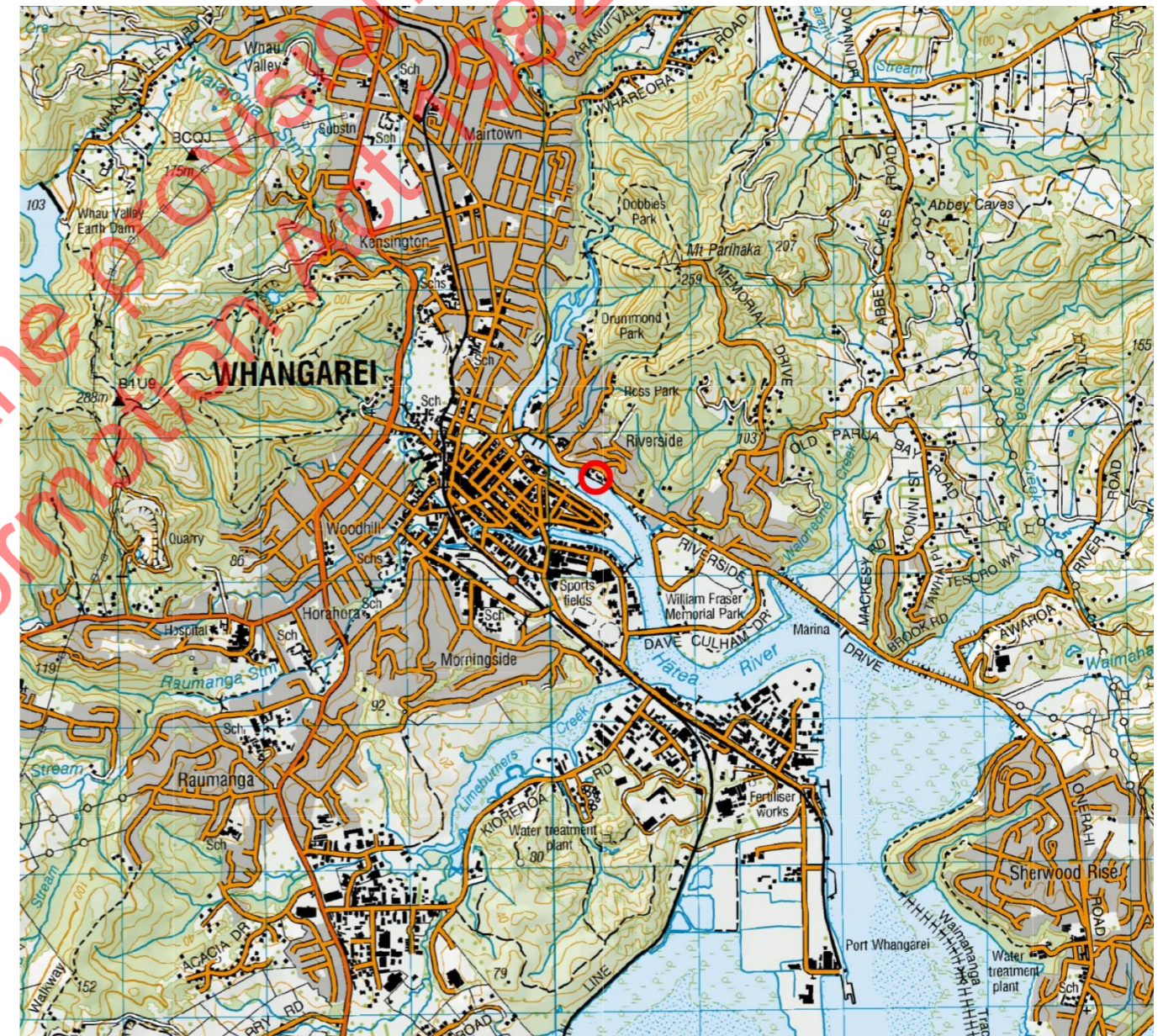


Figure 1: Site Location. (Approximate location of site indicated by red circle.)

2.2 The approximately 17km long Hātea River begins as the Waitaua Stream north of the Whāngārei settlement of Kamo. From here the river flows south eastwards through Tikipunga via the Whāngārei Falls/Otuhau (a 26m high waterfall), AH Reed Memorial Park, Mair Park, the Town Basin and into the Whāngārei Harbour. The stretch of the Hātea adjacent

the site is tidal with a navigation channel formed through the centre enabling all tide access to the Town Basin marina (upriver of the site). Urban development lines much of the river edges and the water feature is regularly dredged to provide for marine traffic.

2.3 On the northern side of the Hātea River is the prominent landmark of Mount Parihaka (**Parihaka**). The volcanic dome rises to some 241m and forms part of the volcanic field that shapes the landscape in and around Whāngārei. The field comprises a group of cinder/scoria cones and lava flows and is suspected to have been active in the last 10,000 years. The bold landforms of Parakiore, Pukenui and Parihaka frame the northern side of Whāngārei (refer **Figure 3** below).

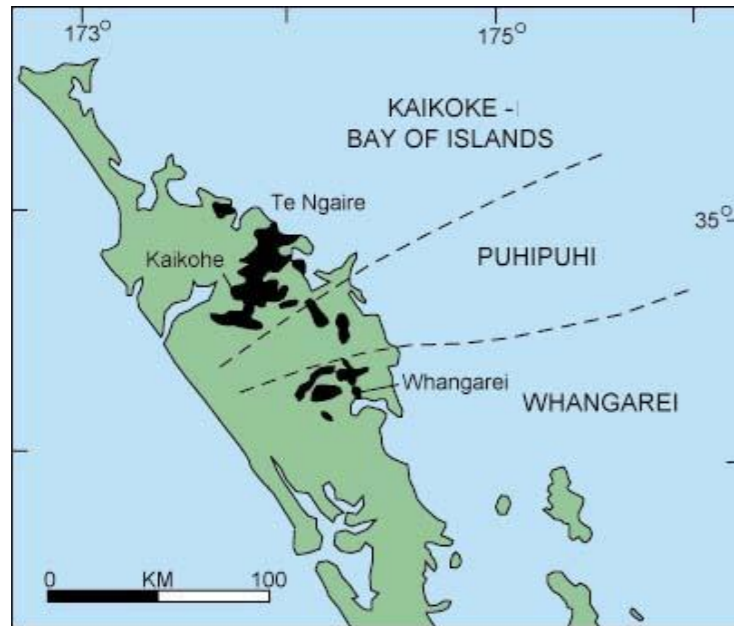


Figure 2: Northland Volcanic Fields.

Source: http://volcano.oregonstate.edu/wdocs/volc_images/australia/new_zealand/whangarei.html

2.4 The bush-covered and elevated flanks of Parihaka are identified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape (**ONL**) under the Northland Regional Policy Statement. A similar area is identified under the Whāngārei District Plan as an Outstanding Natural Feature (**ONF**) with an ONL notation applying to the bush-dominated elevated western and southern slopes (refer **Section 3** for the relevant ONL and ONF mapping).

2.5 The majority of the ONL/ONF area is in mature bush cover, and protected in a series of parks and scenic reserves (e.g. Parihaka Scenic Reserve, Mackesy Scenic Reserve, Ross Park, Drummond Park, Dobbies Park).

2.6 Whāngārei has a rich history with archaeological records indicating extensive occupation by Māori. Ōrūkura Pā was located on the bluff and lower slopes of Mt Parihaka.

2.7 Today, the lower south facing margins of Parihaka are flanked with private dwellings (NB these developed areas are outside the ONF and ONL notations described above). The majority of dwellings are set within a reasonably well vegetated context and oriented to enjoy the expansive views afforded out over the Hātea River, city centre and broader city context to the south.

2.8 The commercial and business centre of Whāngārei is located on the lower-lying land on the western side of the Hātea in the vicinity of the site.

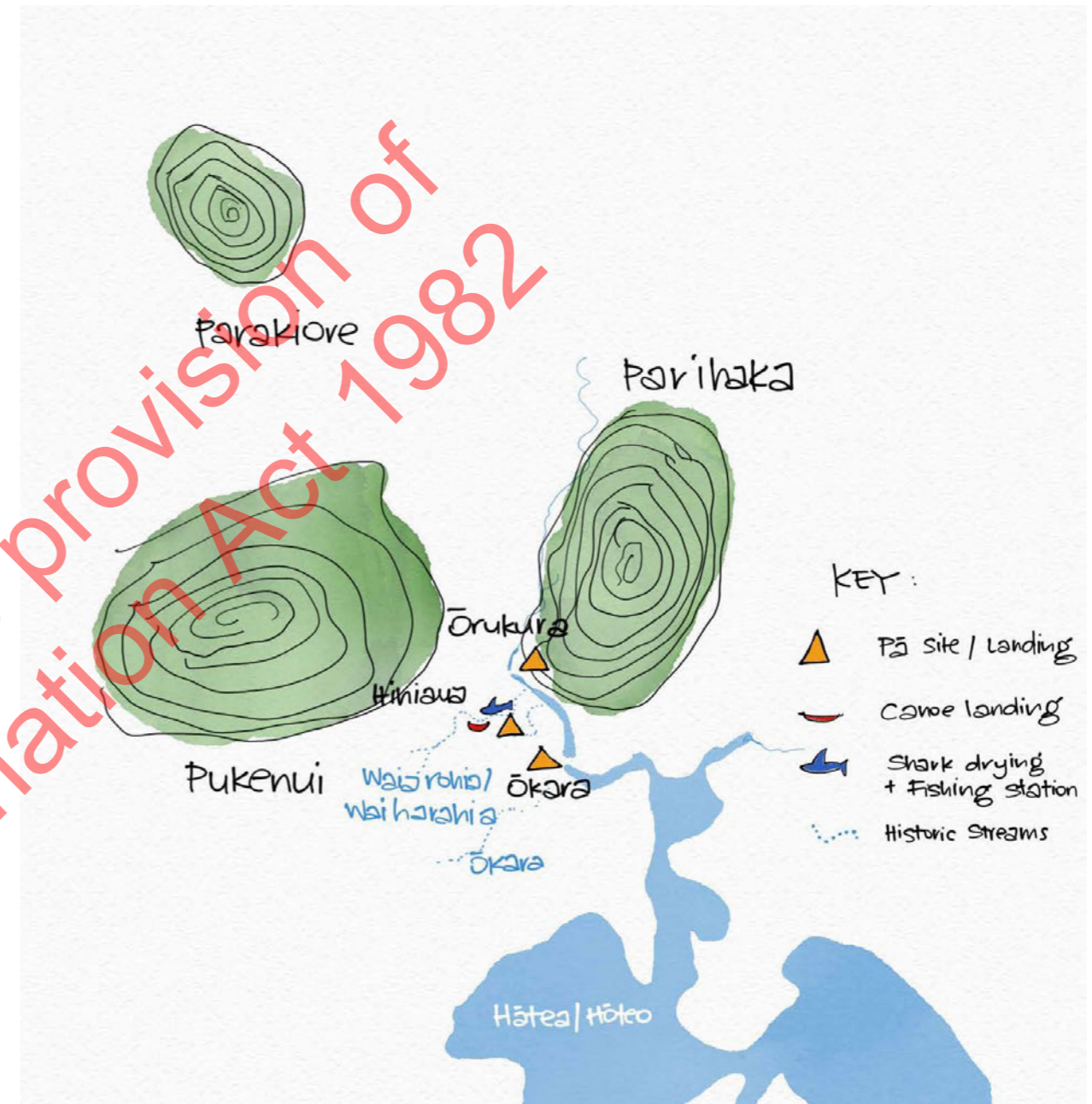


Figure 3: Sketch of key mana whenua landscape elements in the vicinity of the site (described by Matakoho Architecture + Urbanism).

Source: Ōruku Landing – Whāngārei, Northland: Landscape and Urban Design Concept, January 2020 by 4Sight Consulting.

2.9 Over recent years, the city has seen the regeneration of the Town Basin portion of Whāngārei centre as the cultural and marine hub of the city. A range of historic buildings, museums, art centres, restaurants, cafés, and speciality shops (complemented by playgrounds and ample carparking), have established and are popular with locals and visitors alike. Of particular note is the landmark Hundertwasser Wairau Māori Art Gallery under construction within the Town Basin, programmed for completion in 2020.



Figure 4: Artist's impression of proposed Hundertwasser Wairau Māori Art Centre.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hundertwasser_Arts_Centre, photograph by Steve Sharp.

2.10 The marine-based facilities include a 280-berth marina and associated support services, including haul-out facilities and an extensive boat servicing industry. The reputation of the area as a convenient and quality marine hub is borne out by the international yachting community that frequents the area.



Figure 5: Aerial perspective view of the Town Basin and marina with Pukenui in the backdrop.

Source: <https://www.whangareimarina.com/>



Figure 6: Whangārei Visitor map. (Approximate location of site indicated by red circle.)

Source: <https://whangareinz.com/media/documentsReports/2018-Whangareei-Visitor-Map.pdf>

- 2.11 Another marina (Riverside Drive Marina) is located on the north side of the river and to the east of the site.
- 2.12 A popular river walk extends along the length of the Hātea River. More recently, this has been developed to include the highly popular Hātea Loop Walk – Huarahi o te Whai (Pathway of Opportunity). The walkway route takes in the string of cultural attractions in and around the Town Basin, a sculpture walkway, playground, footbridge (Kotuitui Whitinga) and the international award-winning 'Te Matau a Pohe' bascule (opening) bridge. Heritage interpretation signage along the route adds to the memorability and meaning of the route.
- 2.13 The circular nature of the walkway, its proximity to the Town Centre and attractive and engaging character make this a cherished feature of the local community.
- 2.14 The generous network of elevated and bush-dominated publicly accessible landforms, in combination with the Hātea River and Whāngārei Harbour, form the key landscape elements that shape the identity of this part of Whāngārei as an attractive place to live, work, visit and recreate in.

THE SITE

- 2.15 The site itself comprises an approximately 1.25ha flat parcel on the northern side of the Hātea River and at the base of Parihaka, sandwiched between Riverside Drive and the river.



Figure 7: Whangārei Visitor map- zoomed in version. (Approximate location of site indicated by red star.)
 Source: <https://whangareinz.com/media/documents/Reports/2018-Whangareiz-Visitor-Map.pdf>



Figure 8: Wider Context and Site Location

Source: 4Sight Consulting



Figure 9: Site and Immediate Context.

Source: 4Sight Consulting

- 2.16 The land was reclaimed following the construction of Riverside Drive, and at the time of the Town Basin dredging works. A range of marine-based industrial buildings were established on the site and are evident today along with a scrap metal yard, an air conditioning services enterprise, an electrical services facility and other non-marine related businesses. It is fair to say that generally buildings and yards are in a relatively poor state of repair and there is an air of dereliction associated with the site.
- 2.17 Riverside Drive runs along the northern boundary of the site. Riverside Drive forms a busy vehicular route between the city centre, Onerahi, the outer (northern) harbour settlements and the eastern (Pacific) coastline. A discontinuous line of mature pohutukawa specimens are strung along the road reserve adjacent the site.
- 2.18 Immediately beyond the road corridor are the steeply sloping and settled foothills of Panhaka accessed via Punga Grove Avenue and The Bluff. Dwellings tend to be perched onto the side of the landform or strung along secondary ridgeline spurs, and oriented to enjoy the largely south-facing expansive views of the city, river, and harbourscape. A mix of mature exotic and native vegetation throughout some private gardens assists the integration of the wide range of architectural styles evident in part.
- 2.19 Whilst a footpath is provided on the western (or 'site') side of this stretch of Riverside Drive, the relatively inhospitable character of the pedestrian route (as a consequence of its enclosed/cramped character and the dilapidated character of the industrial buildings on the site), together with the alternate walkway option provided along the southern edge of the site as part of the Hātea Loop Walk – Huarahi o te Whai (described shortly), makes this a relatively unused route.

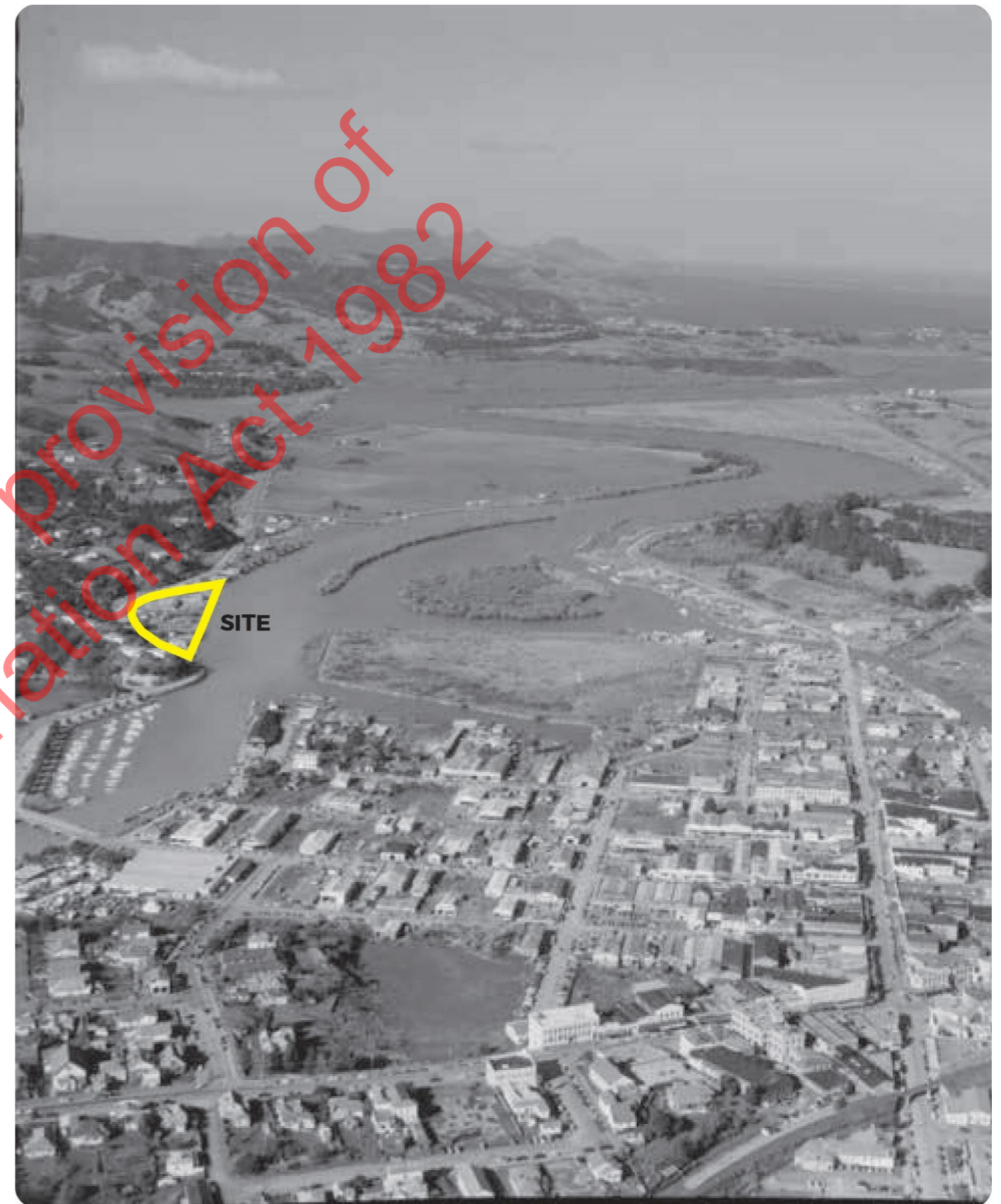


Figure 10: Whāngārei, Northland.

Source: Ōruku Landing – Whāngārei, Northland: Landscape and Urban Design Concept, January 2020 by 4Sight Consulting. (Ref: WA-41780-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/30656355).

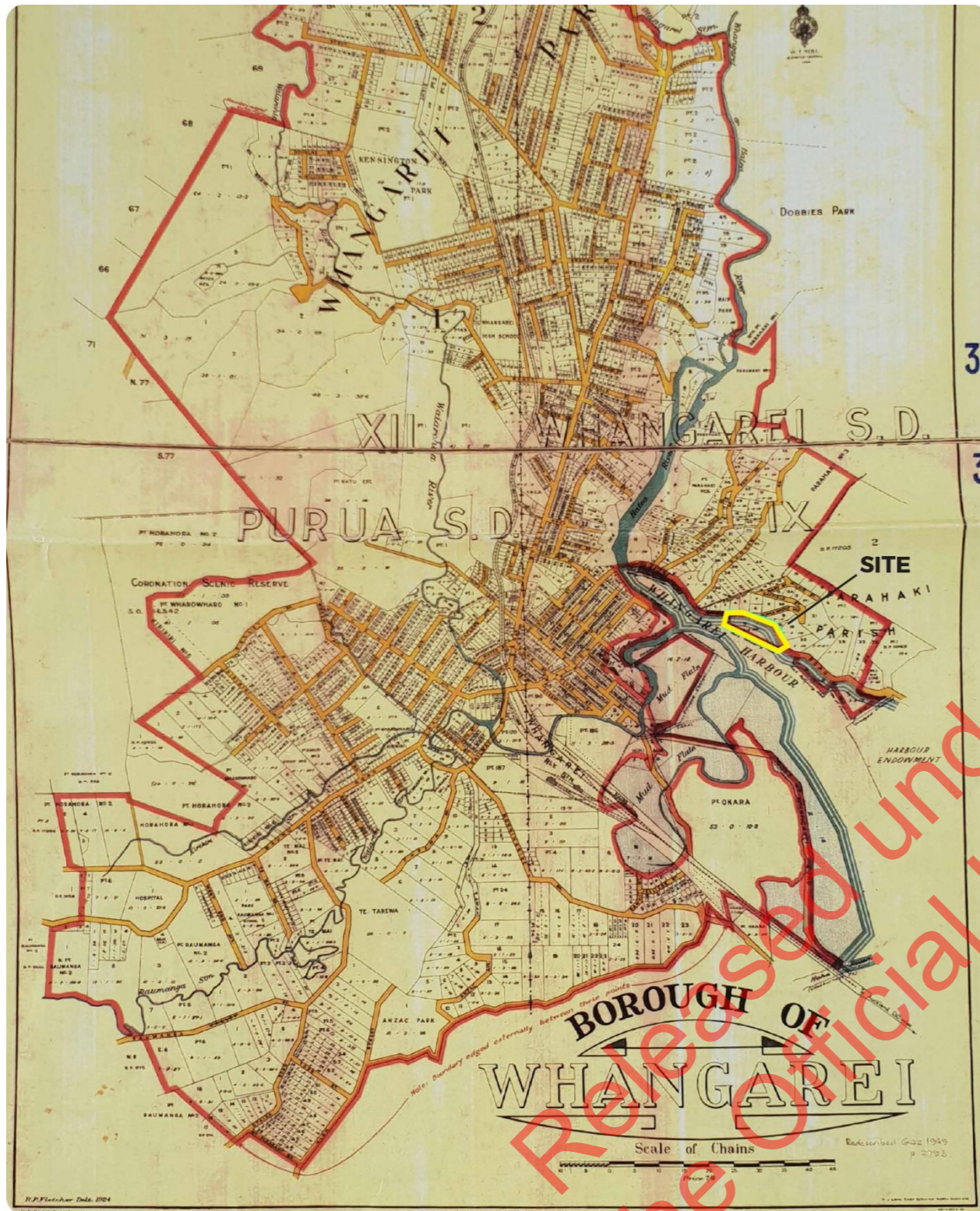


Figure 11: Borough of Whangarei /R.P. Fletcher delt. 1924.

Source: Ōruku Landing – Whāngārei, Northland: Landscape and Urban Design Concept, January 2020 by 4Sight Consulting. (Source URL: http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE18373921).



Figure 12: Photograph looking northeast from the Town Basin playground (on the opposite side of the Hātea River), showing the existing buildings on site, the housing and vegetation clad foothills of Parihaka behind and the boats on the Hātea in the foreground of view.

Source: 4Sight Consulting.

2.20 Immediately east of the site is a line of somewhat whimsical boatsheds sitting between the road and river. Levels throughout this stretch of the road corridor are such that the pedestrian walkway is set below the road adjacent the boat sheds.



Figure 13: Looking westwards along the footpath in front of the boatsheds to the east of the site.

Source: 4Sight Consulting.



Figure 14: Looking south-westwards from the southern edge of the site over the river towards the Town Basin.

Source: 4Sight Consulting.

- 2.21 The southern site boundary is defined by the Hātea River. As mentioned above, the Hātea Loop Walk – Huarahi o te Whai runs along the riverside edge of the site affording views along the river corridor to Parihaka, the Town Basin and beyond to the bush-clad slopes of Pukenui. A number of wilding pohutukawa have established in the sea wall along the river's edge.
- 2.22 On the southern side of the river (opposite the site and beyond the navigation channel), is a series of pile moorings adjacent the riverside reserve coinciding with the Hātea Loop Walk – Huarahi o te Whai. From this portion of the loop walkway, highly engaging views are afforded across the river to the site and Parihaka beyond. Of interest to note is the obscuring effect of existing built development to views of the lower margins of Parihaka, and the scattered patterning of houses seen along 'foothills ridgelines' in such views (noting that the upper slopes of Parihaka are not seen from these locations due to the screening effect of intervening landform).



Figure 15: Photograph showing existing buildings on western portion of site, the Hātea Loop path and wilding Pōhutukawa on seawall.

Source: 4Sight Consulting.



Figure 16: Looking northwards from the riverside walkway across the site to the vegetation clad foothills of Parihaka. Hātea Loop walkway seen to the right of view.

Source: 4Sight Consulting.



Figure 17: Looking westwards to the single boatshed immediately west of the site.

Source: 4Sight Consulting.

- 2.23 The western site boundary adjoins a single-storey boatshed. A concrete boat ramp and wooden jetty are located in the vicinity.
- 2.24 As alluded to above, buildings on the site display an overtly industrial character and are generally in a varying state of disrepair. In places, inhospitable security fencing signals the somewhat abandoned and inhospitable nature of this portion of the river corridor.
- 2.25 Display signage for a development concept for the land along the walkway edging the southern side of the site provides evidence of the long-standing intention for the site to be redeveloped as part of the broader city regeneration programme that is underway in Whāngārei Town Centre.



Photograph 1: Typical character of run-down buildings on the site.



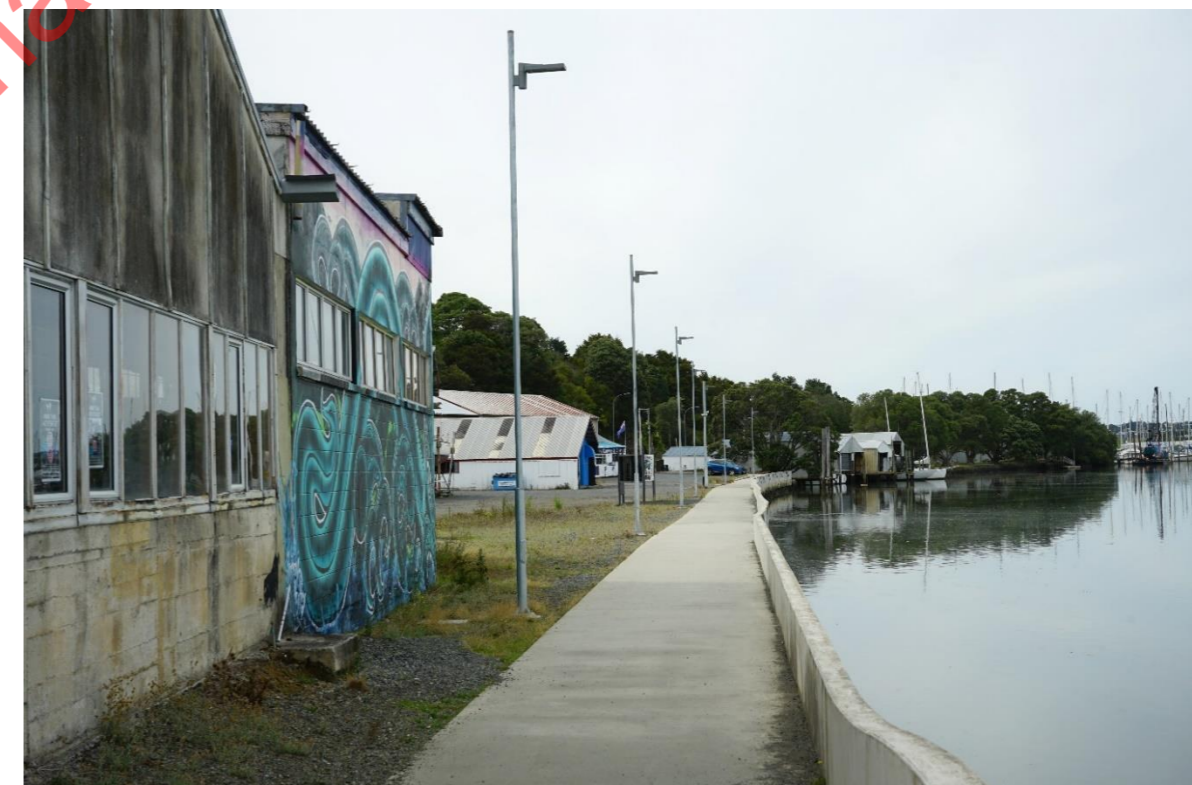
Photograph 2: Typical character of run-down buildings and yards on the site.



Photograph 4: Concept Development display signage on site.



Photograph 3: Concept Development display signage on site.



Photograph 5: Typical character of Hātea Loop Walk – Huarahi o te Whai where it runs along the river edge of the site.



Photograph 6: Typical character of the outlook from the Hātea Loop Walk – Huarahi o te Whai where it runs along the river frontage of the site.



Photograph 7: Typical character of the outlook looking south-westwards to the Town Basin from the Hātea Loop Walk – Huarahi o te Whai where it runs along the river frontage of the site.



Photograph 8: Typical character of the outlook to the site from the Hātea Loop Walk – Huarahi o te Whai on the south side of the river.

SUMMARY

2.26 The key visual amenity, natural character and landscape character attributes associated with the site and local area can be summarised as follows:

- a. The prominent and predominantly bush-clad natural landform of Parihaka.
- b. The Hātea River corridor which forms an important, albeit modified, landscape feature.
- c. A natural character rating for the site and immediate area at the lower end of the spectrum as a consequence of the level of urban modification evident.
- d. The close proximity of the site to the Town Basin, comprising the focus for urban regeneration and the development of a cultural and marine hub for Whāngārei City.
- e. The location of the site along the popular and appealing Hātea Loop Walk – Huarahi o te Whai.
- f. The visibility of the site in attractive views from the Town Basin, river and riverside walkway that take in the river and Parihaka.
- g. The visibility of the site (at least in part) from the settled lower slopes of Parihaka in views out across the river, city and harbour-scape.
- h. The reclaimed nature of the site, its generally dilapidated and inhospitable built character and the paucity of natural vegetation features evident.

3. Statutory Context

3.1 The relevant planning and resource consent documents in relation to the assessment of landscape effects of this proposal are the:

- Resource Management Act (**RMA**);
- New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (**NZCPS**);
- Northland Regional Policy Statement (**NRPS**);
- Operative and Proposed Northland Regional Coastal Plan (**NRCP**);
- Operative Whāngārei District Plan (**OWDP**); and
- Whāngārei District Plan Changes (**WDPC**).

RMA

3.2 The location of the site within the Coastal Environment triggers consideration of s6(a), which requires, as a matter of national importance, the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and the protection of it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

NZCPS

3.3 The location of the site within the Coastal Environment triggers consideration of the NZCPS 2010.

3.4 The aspects of the NZCPS 2010 of relevance to this application are set out as follows (emphasis added to signal relevance):

Policy 13 Preservation of Natural Character, which seeks to:

- preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development;
- avoid adverse effects of activities on natural character in areas of the coastal environment with outstanding natural character;
- avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy, or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment.

Policy 15 Natural Features and Natural Landscapes, which seeks:

To protect the natural features and natural landscapes (including seascapes) of the coastal environment from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:

- (a) avoid adverse effects of activities on outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes in the coastal environment; and

- (b) avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy, or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on other natural features and natural landscapes in the coastal environment.

NRPS

3.5 No 'landscape' or 'natural character' overlays apply to the site itself under the NRPS.

3.6 An ONL overlay applies to the western and southern bush-clad elevated slopes of Parihaka. The extent of the ONL broadly corresponds to the bush-clad western and southern slopes that take in Parihaka Scenic Reserve and Mackesy Bush Reserve and are visible from Whāngārei Town Centre.

3.7 Much of the site is identified as sitting within the Coastal Environment under the NRPS.

3.8 Relevant objectives within the NRPS to the site itself require the identification and protection of the qualities that make up the natural character of the coastal environment from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development, with a particular focus on the consideration of significant adverse effects (consistent with the policy approach of NZCPS Policy 15 cited above).

3.9 With respect to the Parihaka ONL, NRPS policy draws from RMA s6(b) which requires the avoidance of inappropriate development.

NRCP

3.10 The proposed marina, ferry terminal and part of the proposed promenade coincides with the **Marine 2 (Conservation) Management Area** under the Operative NRCP (**ONRCP**) and sits within the **Whāngārei City Centre Marine Zone** under the Proposed NRCP (**PNRCP**).

3.11 Relevant objectives and policies under the ONRCP focus on: providing for appropriate structures while avoiding, remedying, or mitigating adverse effects; and maintaining and, where practicable, enhancing existing natural and amenity values.

3.12 Relevant objectives and policies under the PNRCP recognise the benefit that marinas can make to enabling public access to, along, and within the CMA and providing for recreational opportunities within the CMA, acknowledging that development and structures need to be appropriate, with adverse effects appropriately avoided, mitigated, or remedied. Policy flags the need for such structures and developments to be designed to reflect the benefit of landscape and urban design treatment.

OWDP

3.13 It should be noted that no 'landscape' or 'natural character' overlays apply to the site itself.

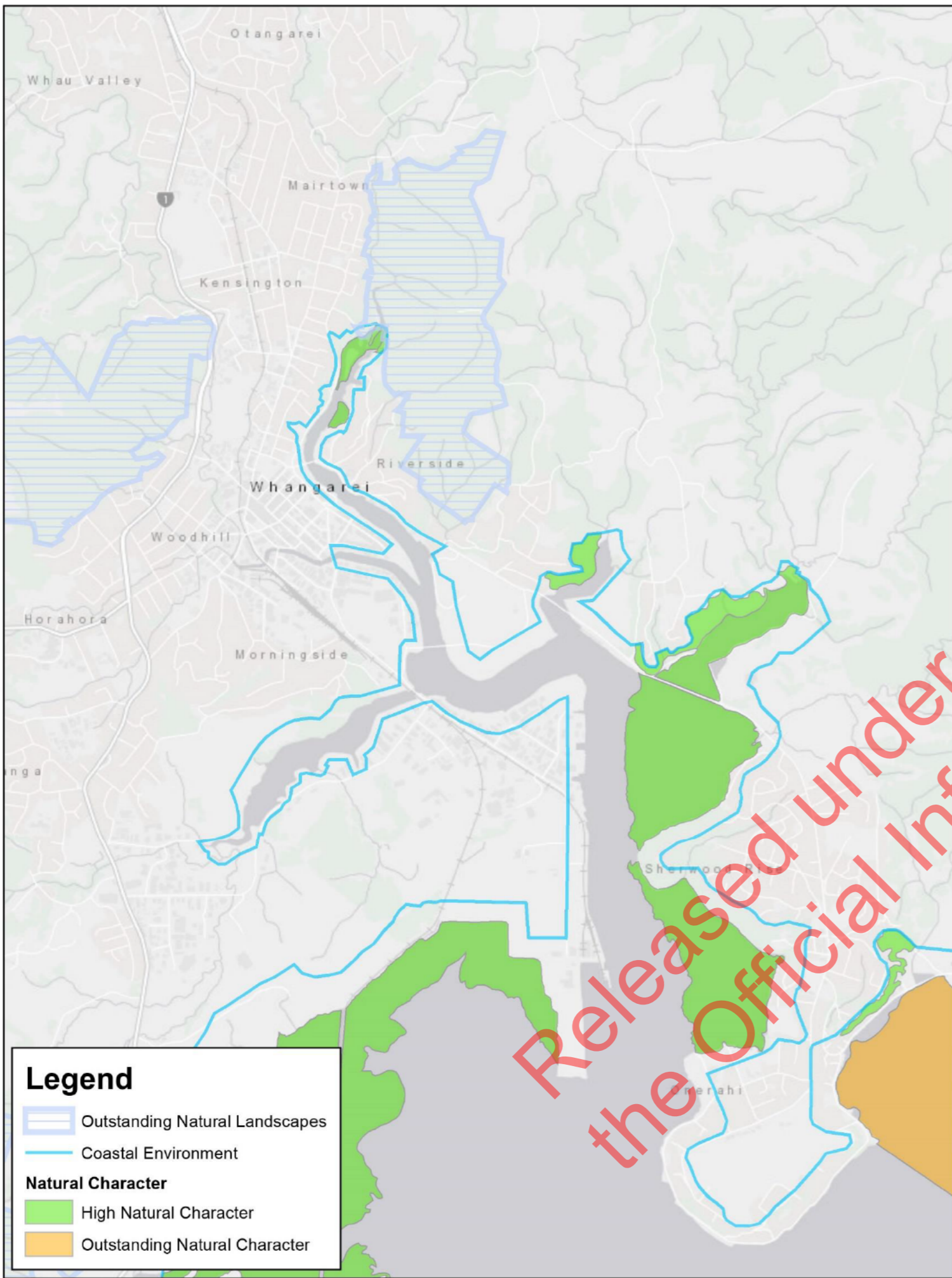
3.14 An ONL and ONF notation applies to the elevated and bush-dominated slopes of Parihaka to the north east of the site. The extent of the ONL corresponds to that identified in the NRPS. The ONF notation applies to the extent of volcanic landform feature and therefore extends eastwards to include the northern and eastern elevated slopes.

- 3.15 Relevant objectives and policies for these landscape overlay areas reflect the underlying policy direction of RMA s6(b) to avoid inappropriate subdivision use and development.
- 3.16 The site is zoned **Riverside Drive Sub Environment of the Town Basin Environment** under the **Operative WDP**.
- 3.17 Objectives and policies relevant to the application focus on the following key themes:
- a. The maintenance and enhancement of landscape, natural character, and visual amenity values of the local environment (including the Town Basin and the Town Basin Open Space Sub Environment).
 - b. Ensuring development does not unduly compromise the outlook and privacy of adjoining properties.
 - c. Ensuring development does not visually dominate the road and enhances the overall character of the streetscape.
 - d. Ensuring development reinforces and enhances the visual and physical integration of the area with the Town Basin Precinct.

WDPC

- 3.18 The site is identified as Waterfront Mixed Use under Plan Change 88 to the WDP. Relevant objectives and policies focus on:
- a. Protecting viewshafts of Parihaka and the waterfront.
 - b. Retaining a sense of openness.
 - c. Managing adverse effects on the adjacent Green Space and Medium Density Residential Zones.
- 3.19 Of importance to note is that there are no specific 'viewshafts' to Parihaka identified in PC 88. (This is in contrast to say the AUP:OP where location specific volcanic viewshafts are identified in the Plan.)

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Legend

- Outstanding Natural Landscapes
- Coastal Environment

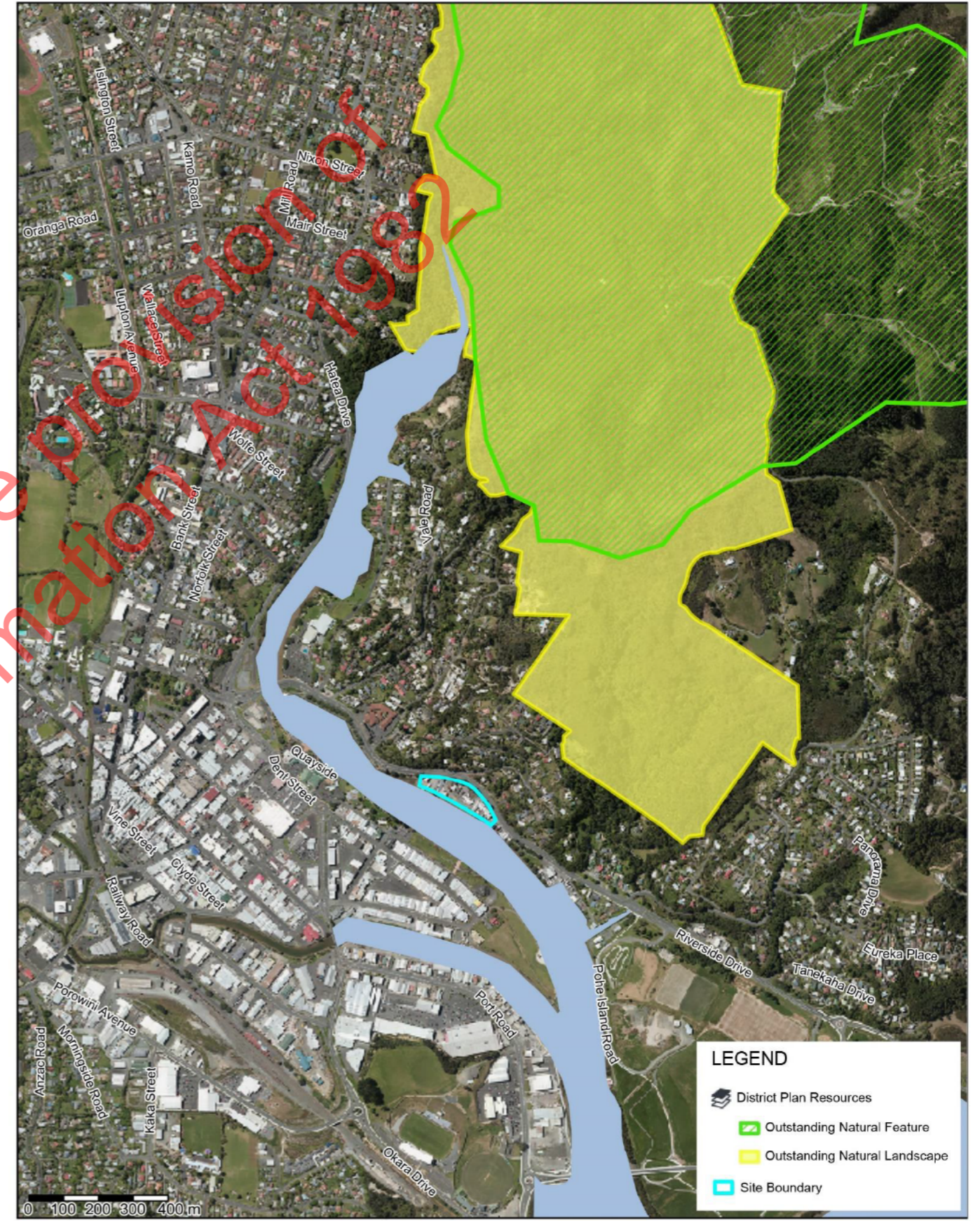
Natural Character

- High Natural Character
- Outstanding Natural Character

Figure 18: Northland Regional Policy Statement map

District Plan Map

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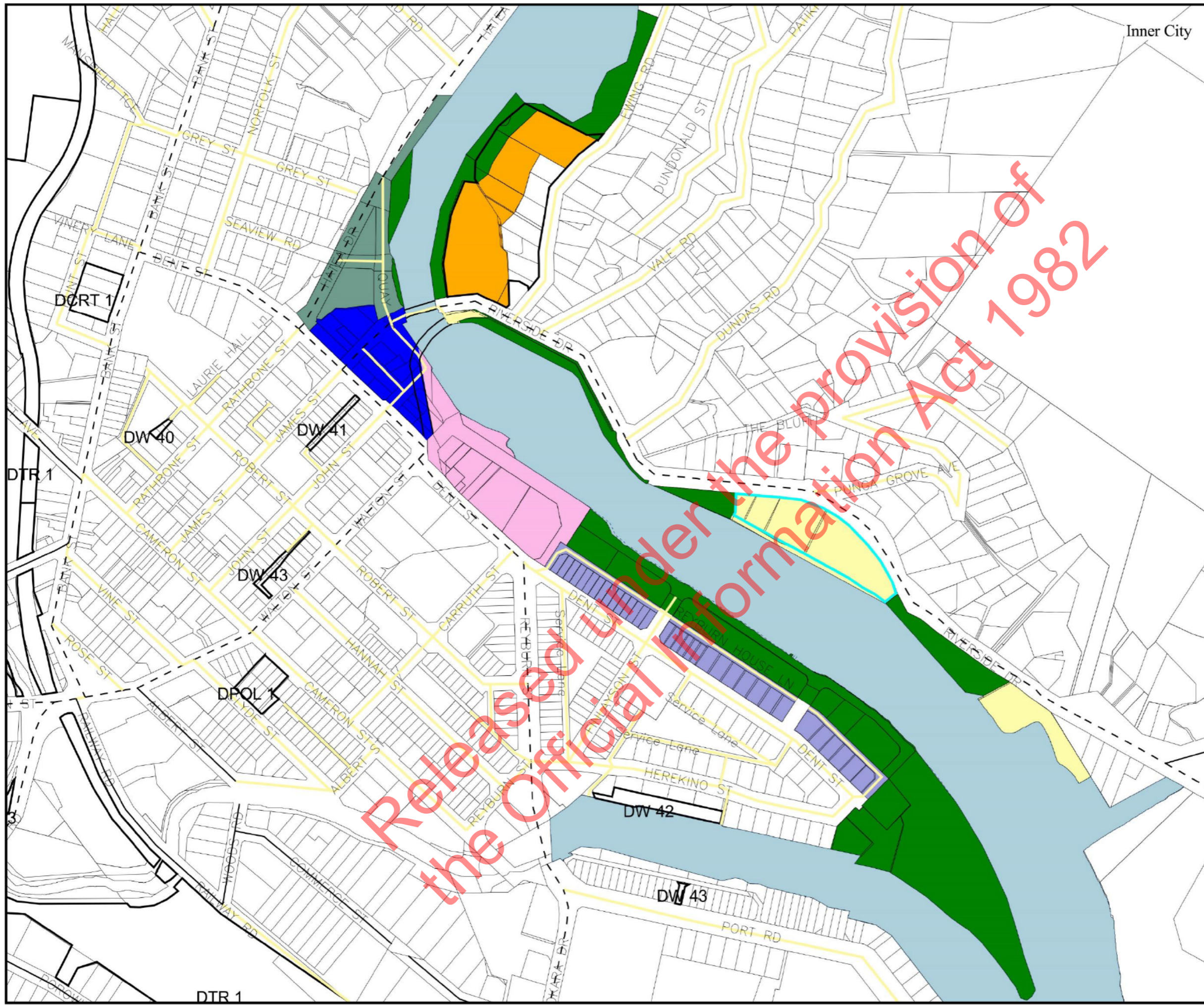
LEGEND

- District Plan Resources
- Outstanding Natural Feature
- Outstanding Natural Landscape
- Site Boundary

Scale: 1:15000
Original Sheet Size A4

Projection: NZGD2000 / New Zealand Transverse Mercator 2000
Bounds: 1719060.94209154,6044481.0095462
1721793.02982946,6047972.45696421

Figure 19: Operative Whangarei District Plan map



**Town Basin Environments
Sub Environments**

- Lower Dent Street SE
- Open Space SE
- Town Basin SE
- Riverside Drive SE
- Up River SE
- Ewing Road SE
- Western Town Basin SE

- TLA Boundary
- State Highway
- Arterial Roads
- Collector Roads
- Indicative Roads
- Local Roads
- Coastline

Coastline indicates the mean high water springs (MHWS), which also indicates the jurisdictional boundary between the Northland Regional Council and the Whangarei District Council.

- Site Boundary



Figure 20: Town Basin Sub Environments

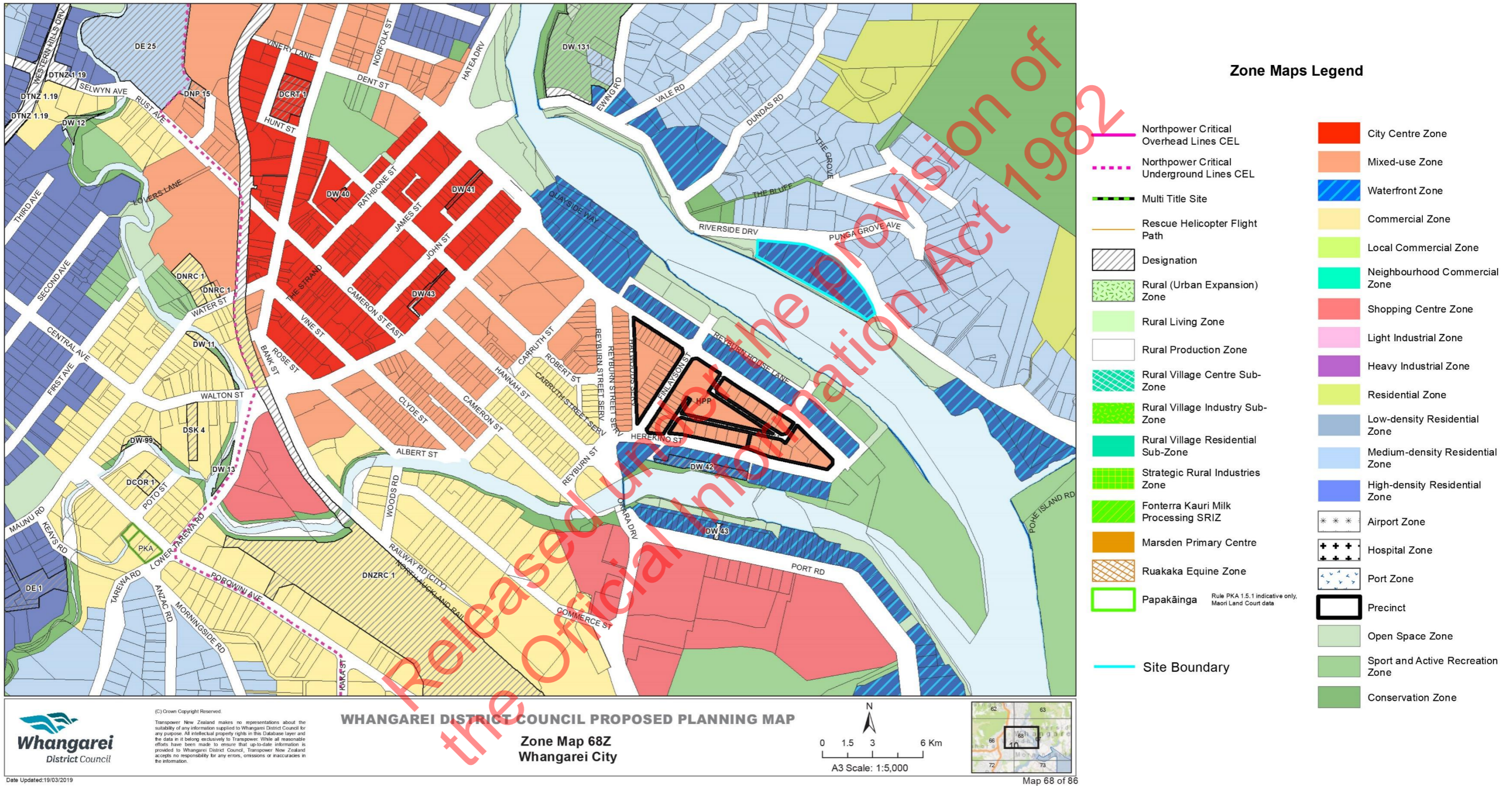


Figure 21: Zoning Map

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4. Proposed Development

- 4.1 It is proposed to develop the site as an hotel and entertainment precinct which includes:
- an events centre;
 - a four-star hotel (132 keys);
 - a mixed use building (with retail, 20 apartments, and car parking building);
 - an electric ferry dock;
 - a 29 berth, fully serviced marina;
 - a floating public boardwalk;
 - a riverfront promenade;
 - a public plaza; and
 - a public paddle board and kayak launching area.
- 4.2 A comprehensive urban design and landscape strategy is proposed as part of the development, as illustrated in the plans and reports prepared by 4Sight Consulting.
- 4.3 A fundamental aim of the project is to provide Whangarei with a world class facility that will enhance the local economy as well as attract domestic and international visitors to the region. As the architectural description explains:
- The overall design of the development is to be “uniquely Whangarei”.
 - It is to be designed for locals and visitors, and representative of all of Northland.
 - The development is to be warm, light, strong and adventurous, open, comfortable, welcoming, raw, genuine, vibrant, unique, natural, real and unstructured, environmentally sustainable, modern but not too shiny, connected and connecting.
 - There is to be a strong cultural narrative threaded seamlessly throughout the design.
- 4.4 The entire development sits some 1.5m above existing ground level to protect the buildings from flooding and the hotel and mixed use buildings have been oriented towards the two closest historic pā sites.

EVENTS CENTRE

- 4.5 The events centre is located at the eastern end of the site, bounded by both Riverside Road and the Hātea Loop. The multi-purpose theatre and events centre will be capable of accommodating up to 950 people and includes a mezzanine with café facilities. The top of the building is set at RL 14.35 (excepting the lightbox sign element and kitchen extracts) with an overall building coverage of approximately 2,946m².
- 4.6 The western end of the building includes a double-height canopy that projects into the public plaza. The main façade that fronts the plaza is largely glazed, while the Riverside Road and Hātea Loop façades have more limited glazing due to the internal use of the building as an events centre.
- 4.7 Exterior building materials include a mix of: clear float glazing; coloured precast concrete panels; aluminium frame joinery; painted exposed structural steel; and corten rain screens. A kete kai patterning that has been developed in consultation with iwi is integrated into the building façade treatment. Living façades have also been included on the building to break up the Hātea Loop and Plaza elevations and a sign light box element is has been designed to integrate into the roof and overall building design.
- 4.8 All of the loading and servicing access is via the eastern end of the Riverside Drive frontage. The manoeuvring space for turning is located within the building; while storage, kitchen, and loading is proposed in a basement beneath the

Events Centre. An above-ground car park is proposed as part of the Mixed Use Building (on the western portion of the site and discussed shortly) which will provide parking for the Events Centre.

FOUR-STAR HOTEL

- 4.9 The proposed hotel is 5 storeys (approximately 19.5 m high to the roof parapet from plaza level with an additional 3.2 m of screening to the roof plant area) and an overall building coverage of approximately 2,327m². It is likely that this will be part of a second stage of development as demand requires.
- 4.10 The building comprises a simple rectilinear form and is orientated perpendicular across the site (from Riverside Drive to the Hātea River) and has been positioned to create a ‘V’ shape between the Mixed Use Building and Hotel allowing for coach manoeuvring and lobby space. The ‘V’ shape is a symbolic reference to the black spoonbill kotuku which fly in a migratory pyramid formation south from Mount Parihaka. This arrangement also allows for the operational needs of the building as a hotel, which requires a centralised corridor room arrangement with optimal outlook from all rooms.
- 4.11 The southern elevation opens to the riverfront promenade. A semi-private pool, wellness/spa (single storey) and garden space is located along the western side of the hotel facing towards the mixed use building and framing the hotel.
- 4.12 The hotel building is positioned some 21m to the west of the Events Centre, providing an approximately 17m width (at its narrowest point) viewshaft through to Parihaka from the river and open space/cityscape to the south.
- 4.13 The ground floor includes a lobby, restaurant, and bar, and four varying-sized retail/commercial tenancies to provide some activation to the plaza. Uses may include: a craft brewery; ice cream shop; bicycle/scooter rental; and gift/florist shop. The semi-private internal courtyard also provides three additional tenancies for day spa uses and a pool - creating an internal wellness area to the development.
- 4.14 The four-star hotel comprises 132 rooms and includes eight suites (two per floor) at the southern end of the building overlooking the river.
- 4.15 The southern portion of the building is cantilevered over the riverfront promenade (Hātea Loop walkway) and extends some 5m beyond MHWS, out over the Hātea River. Exterior building materials include: clear float glazing; painted structural steel; textured flat panel and options of either timber rain screens (either dark or light), concrete panels, or corten steel. In a similar vein to the Events Centre, a kete whakapuareare (medium weave) patterning that has been developed in consultation with iwi is integrated into the building façade treatment. A green roof is proposed to the hotel building.
- 4.16 Vehicular access to the hotel (and nearby Mixed Use Building) will be via a new four-way signalised intersection at Riverside Drive and Punga Grove Avenue.

MIXED USE BUILDING

- 4.17 Mixed Use building is proposed at the western end of the site. The building is five storeys in height and contains twenty riverfront apartments, five retail units and a five-storey car parking building fronting Riverside Road. The carpark will include changing areas, bike parking and EV charging bays. Retail units are configured throughout the ground floor with direct access from the promenade and plaza. The top of the building extends to approximately RL 19.65 with an overall building coverage of approximately 2,519m².

- 4.18 The façade treatment around the apartments has been designed to represent the ornamental kete (or tight weave) which is symbolic of longest stays. Materiality of the mixed use building will be either decorative and embossed 200mm precast lightweight concrete panels or textured flat panels. The car parking building will also include a living façade/living wall – with steel wires and *Tecomanthe speciosa*, Three Kings Island climber, or similar in planters at ground level along the road frontage to help break up the bulk and massing of the car parking building. The façade of the car park will generally not be visually permeable (although some areas of air flow will be required for ventilation). The mixed use building also proposes a living roof (green roof) to mitigate the large portion of blank roof space from the residents located behind on the foothills of Mount Parihaka.

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MARINA, FERRY DOCK AND PADDLE BOARD/KAYAK LAUNCH AREA

- 4.19 A 29-berth private marina is proposed along the river frontage of the site. A floating boardwalk extending the length of marina will be publicly accessible.
- 4.20 A ferry dock/terminal is also proposed near the hotel, enabling ferries to operate between the Town Basin and Northport at the mouth of the Whāngārei Harbour, where cruise ships are scheduled to arrive in April 2021. This facility will include

food kiosks and a ticketing office. It is envisaged that a ferry service will be introduced, enabling cruise ship passengers to easily access Whāngārei CBD and other destinations along the Whāngārei Harbour/Hātea River corridor.

- 4.21 At the far western end of the site, a public paddle board/kayak launching facility is proposed.



Figure 22: Landscape Concept Plan.

Source: Ōruku Landing – Whāngārei, Northland: Landscape and Urban Design Concept, January 2020 by 4Sight Consulting.

LANDSCAPE

- 4.22 The proposed landscape treatment focuses on the following key strategies:
- a. Integration of **Te Aranga principles** throughout each 'layer' of the landscape strategy.
 - b. The establishment of a central **public plaza** between the Events Centre and Hotel that enables views from the river and riverside reserve/city to the south, through the site to the lower slopes of Parihaka. Pōhutukawa specimens are proposed throughout the plaza to establish a human scale. Public art will be encouraged within this area.
 - c. The creation of a generous **riverside promenade** along the river frontage of the site that forms part of the Hātea Loop Walkway network. The promenade extends out over the tidal mud flats and has been designed to accommodate a shared path and space for cultural and community events and markets. Ropes are proposed from the promenade to support oyster colonies and this generous walkway route will link with the publicly accessible floating pontoons that form part of the proposed marina. Public art will be encouraged within this area.
 - d. A **green roof** treatment to the Hotel and part of the Mixed Use Building.
 - e. The **retention of the existing pohutukawa street tree plantings** (excepting 2 specimens) along the Riverside Drive frontage of the site and their augmentation where appropriate, to create a continuous tree-lined frontage.
 - f. The introduction of **pohutukawa specimens around the eastern and southern sides of the Events Centre building** to assist the integration of these more 'solid' elevations into the wider landscape.
 - g. A creation of an **Hotel Pool Garden** between the Hotel and Mixed Use Building with pohutukawa specimens and planted pots to provide a degree of privacy and promote a human scale in this space.
 - h. The use of a locally appropriate and coordinated range of **hard landscape features and materials** that celebrate the riverside setting, the site's maritime history and the importance of the wider area to mana whenua, including: pou herenga waka (mooring posts for wayfinding); exposed aggregate concrete finishes incorporating oyster shells, pou herenga waka hammocks, timber marine-style seats and benches.
 - i. The use of a coordinated palette of locally appropriate eco-sourced native species for the **soft landscape** throughout the site as detailed in the 4Sight Landscape and Urban Design Concept report.
- 4.23 Consistent with WDC procedures, it is envisaged that a condition of consent will form part of the consented development that requires the preparation of a Landscape Management Plan. The Landscape Management Plan will outline the long term (i.e. in perpetuity) maintenance and management obligations associated with the landscape proposals and will require approval by Council officers before the construction works start.

5. Visual Catchment and Viewing Audience

- 5.1 Relying on the description of the site and local area outlined in Section 2, there is the potential for the following audiences to be affected by the proposed development:
- a. Users of marine craft on the Hātea River, including both static (i.e. moored or berthed at the marina) and transitory craft.
 - b. Users of the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway and associated public open space network on either side of the Hātea River, approximately stretching westwards to the Town Basin and eastwards to the footbridge – Kotuitui Whitinga and 'Te Matau a Pohe' bascule (opening) bridge.
 - c. Occupants and visitors at the commercial properties on the south side of the Hātea River, very roughly opposite the site, and including:
 - i. The line of single and two-storey mixed use buildings along Reyburn House Lane (light industrial, commercial, recreation/tourism and residential uses).
 - ii. The single and two-storey buildings along the river frontage of the Town Basin which include a range of hospitality, recreation/tourism, and commercial uses.
 - d. Users of Riverside Drive (motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists).
 - e. Users of Punga Grove Avenue and The Bluff roads on the lower, south-facing slopes of Mt Parihaka.
 - f. Residents on the lower, south-facing slopes of Mt Parihaka (accessed via Punga Grove Avenue and The Bluff).
- 5.2 With respect to the visibility of the site from the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway, it is important to note that the arrangement of well-established riverside plantings (on public land), and the configuration of the landform (which includes localised ridgeline spurs and mounded areas), means that visibility of the site is highly variable along the course of the walkway. In places, riverside vegetation (and to a lesser degree, localised mounding) serves to screen views of the site. In other locations, views of the site are filtered by vegetation and elsewhere there are open views to the site.
- 5.3 For residents and road users on the lower, south-facing slopes of Parihaka, well-established native and exotic amenity plantings around dwellings, in combination with the steep landform profile, serves to filter or screen views of the site from many locations. It is expected that this includes at least some of the dwellings throughout this catchment.
- 5.4 Consistent with 'landscape' assessment best practice, a range of representative viewpoints have been identified for detailed visual effects analysis that capture the 'worst case scenario' and clearly illustrate the scale and character of visual change that will be experienced in and around the site and throughout the wider visual catchment. The representative viewpoints are as follows:
- a. **Viewpoint 1:** from the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway adjacent the Town Basin (to the west of the site).
 - b. **Viewpoint 2:** from the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway/reserve roughly opposite the site.
 - c. **Viewpoint 3:** from the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway to the southwest of the site.
 - d. **Viewpoint 4:** from the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway on the footbridge – Kotuitui Whitinga to the south west of the site.
 - e. **Viewpoint 5:** from the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway on the north side of the Hātea River and adjacent Pohe Island Road.
 - f. **Viewpoint 6:** from the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway on the north side of the Hātea River at 50 Riverside Drive (reserve land).
 - g. **Viewpoint 7:** from the Hātea River.
 - h. **Viewpoint 8:** from the 'band' of private residences throughout the base or 'toe' of the lower slopes of Mt Parihaka adjacent Riverside Drive (i.e. numbers 24, 29, 31, 33, 35, 41, 41A and 43 Riverside Drive; and 1, 1A, 14A and 18 Punga Grove Avenue) and referred to as the '**toe of slope residences**'.
 - i. **Viewpoint 9:** from the 'band' of private residences throughout the mid slopes of the lower flanks of Mt Parihaka adjacent Riverside Drive (i.e. numbers 5, 7 and 9 The Bluff (noting that mature vegetation serves to screen views from numbers 1 and 3 The Bluff to the site); 3, 3A, 4, 5, 5A,6, 6A, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 20 and 22 Punga Grove Avenue), and referred to as the '**mid slope residences**'.
 - j. **Viewpoint 10:** from the 'band' of private residences throughout the more elevated parts of the lower flanks of Mt Parihaka that frame the site (i.e. numbers 24, 25A 26, 27, 27A, 27B, 28, 29, 29A, 29B, 29C, 29D,30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 34A, 36, 37, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 74 Punga Grove Avenue), and referred to as the '**elevated slope residences**'.
- 5.5 The location of the representative viewpoints assessed is shown on **Figure 23** below.

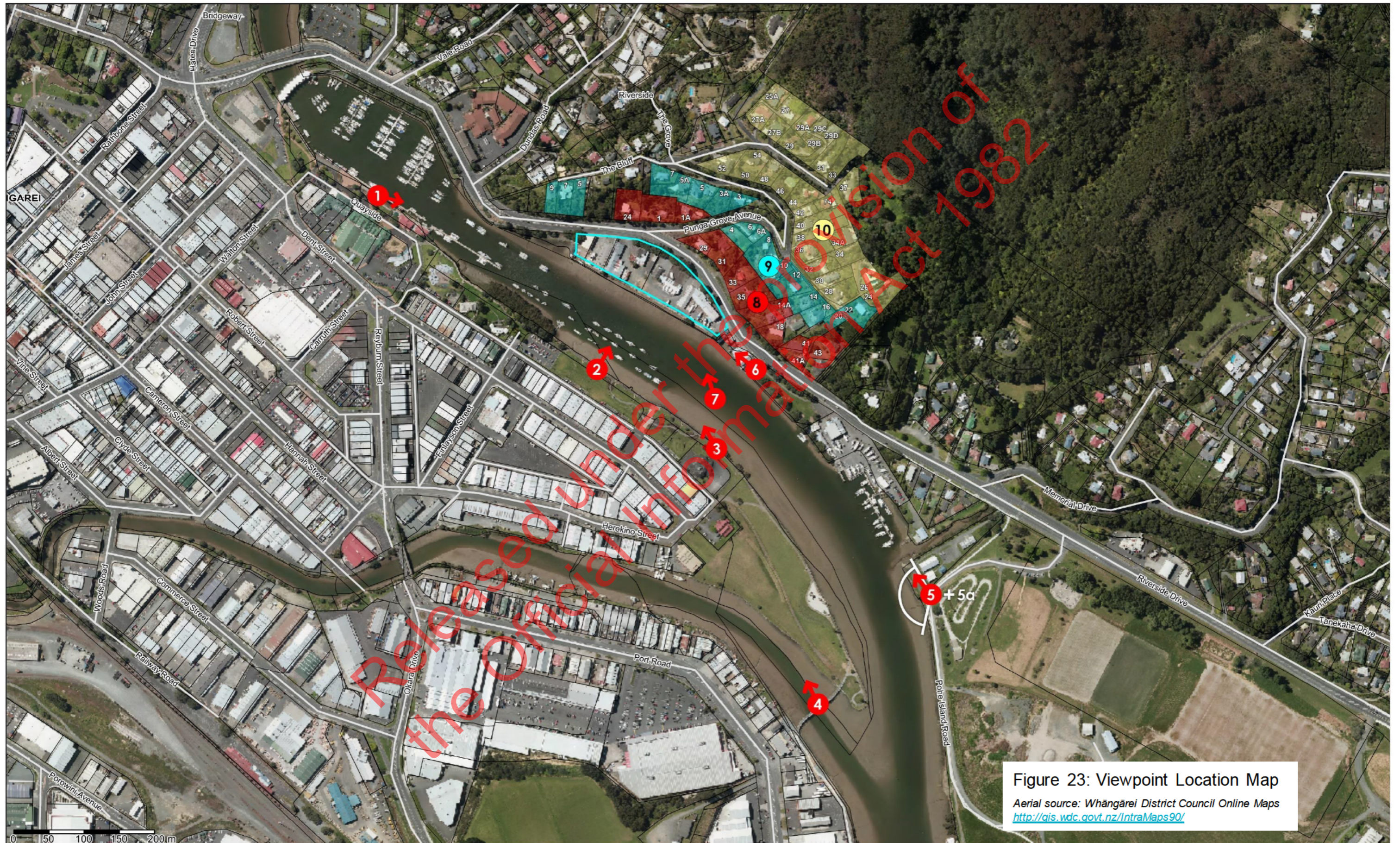


Figure 23: Viewpoint Location Map
Aerial source: Whāngārei District Council Online Maps
<http://gis.wdc.govt.nz/IntraMaps90/>

6. Visual, Natural Character and Landscape Effects

6.1 As explained earlier, the effects methodology that has been applied in this assessment is attached in **Appendix 1**.

VISUAL EFFECTS

6.2 The visual effects analysis relies on a mix of Architectural Impressions, rendered building model views, cross sections, desktop analysis using aerials with contours and field.

6.3 HB Architects (**HBA**) prepared the Architects Impressions and have advised that the following methodology was used in the preparation of that material:

Image on HBA Drawing 2.14/E was supplied by 4Sight. It is HB Architect's understanding that the original image was taken using a camera with a 50mm lens.

The image on HBA Drawing 2.15/E is a panorama. The lens used to record that image is not known.

Images on HBA Drawings 2.16/B, 2.19/B, 2.20/B and 2.21/B were taken by HBA using a camera with a 50mm lens.

From the CAD model which was created/produced of the entire site it was possible to establish the exact location from where the real life images were taken. The camera within the CAD model was set to create the same image as the actual site photograph, so that the CAD model could then be inserted into the actual image. This was done using photoshop. The new buildings were height checked against the existing, having first determined the existing height off the current buildings on the site.

This methodology is approximate only. It uses best endeavours to create images which are as accurate as possible without resorting to the use of survey data.

6.4 Whilst not strictly in accordance with the NZILA Best Practice Guide for Visual Simulations, I confirm that the method adopted is 'fit for purpose' in this instance and provides a reasonable understanding of the visual outcome anticipated by the proposed development.

6.5 The (HB Architects) Architectural Perspectives also include the proposed specimen tree plantings in the 4Sight Landscape Plans. Trees have been modelled at 8m height and assume using transplanted semi-mature stock (noting that pohutukawa is a species that is particularly well suited to transplanting).

6.6 However, in the event that transplanted stock is unavailable at the time of construction, perspectives have also been modelled with no planting. This reflects more closely the visual outcome that will be apparent once the building is completed and large nursery stock is planted. (e.g. 1,000 litre grade stock). It is reasonable to expect that assuming best horticultural practice, these specimens would achieve a height of 8m after approximately 10 years growth.

6.7 The assessor has not visited any of the private properties referenced in the viewpoints above. This is not unusual in a 'landscape' assessment of this type.

6.8 Analysis of the visibility (and potential visual effects) in relation to each of these properties is based on expert interpretation determined by field visit to the road network adjacent each property, examining the visibility of each dwelling from the site itself (the 'reverse view', noting of course that the proposed development will be appreciably higher than a person standing on site looking back up to the lower slopes of Parihaka), and expert interpretation of

aerial mapping of the area overlaid with LiDAR contour data (5m contour interval), HBA Drawings 2.17/01 and 2.18/01 and Google Earth imagery.

6.9 Also of importance to note in the consideration of visual effects in relation to private residences, is the accepted notion that such views are not protected per se under the RMA. Typically, in considering visual amenity effects for residential audiences in an urban context, analysis focusses on issues of shading, visual dominance, privacy, and overlooking. In the context of this proposal, the outlooks of private properties may be considered as a component of visual amenity, where the proposed buildings are introduced into those outlooks. However, the importance and significance of any particular outlook to the amenity of a property must first be considered in determining the extent of relevant effect on that property.

Viewpoint 1

Viewpoint 1: from the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway adjacent the Town Basin (to the west of the site).

6.10 Refer **Architects Impression: Town Basin Panorama (VP1)**. From this vantage point, some 315 metres from the site, the development area currently reads as an ad hoc grouping of derelict and tired industrial buildings on the river's edge.

6.11 The foreground of view is dominated by the varyingly open waters of the Hātea River and clutter of boats, yachts, mooring piles and marina infrastructure. The single and two-storey large footprint buildings of the Distinction Whāngārei Hotel and groupings of apartment buildings along Riverside Drive are seen to the left of view behind road and riverside tree plantings.

6.12 Although outside the field of view displayed in the photograph, from this location there is also a distinct awareness of the viewer's position in the heart of the Town Basin, a distinctly modified, 'busy' and highly complex visual environment.

6.13 The vegetation-dominated lower slopes, foothills, and ridgelines throughout the southern and eastern side of Parihaka dominate the backdrop of the outlook, conferring a distinctly green and relatively 'undeveloped' backcloth to the overall composition. The seemingly spacious patterning of buildings dotted throughout this backdrop, together with the continuity of vegetation cover and uninterrupted skyline profile, forms a marked contrast with the clutter and busyness of the river corridor and its immediate cityscape margins.

6.14 This coherent and predominantly green backdrop, together with the open waters and muddle of marine craft in the foreground of view, results in an engaging and appealing riverside cityscape outlook. The dynamic river waters add to this appeal.

6.15 It should also be noted that for audiences on the opposite side of the river, to the north west of the site intervening vegetation (in particular) serves to filter or screen views to the site in places.

6.16 The proposed development will be seen in the mid to background of the view, set against the lower vegetated slopes of Parihaka with the top of the buildings sitting below the vegetated ridgeline.

6.17 Whilst a noticeable change to the existing outlook, the high-quality design of all aspects of the Ōruku Landing development will ensure that it does not detract from the character or quality of the existing outlook, but rather enhances the impression of a thriving and buzzing riverside cityscape that is evident in the Town Basin.

- 6.18 A number of factors are critical to this outcome, including:
- The visually recessive colouration and low reflectivity of all of the buildings (ie the Mixed Use Building and the southwestern portion of the Hotel) viewed from this orientation which means that the built development tones sympathetically with the dark mottled greens of the vegetation-dominated backdrop.
 - The highly modulated and richly textured western and southern façade treatment to the Mixed Use Building which includes: a range of materials including glazing, coloured precast concrete, aluminium louvre screens, punched aluminium mesh rain screens, living walls and glass balustrading; a stepped profile along the south and side; and a pleasing rhythm of building indentations along the western elevation.
 - The shadowing arising from the varied elevation treatment combined with the site location on the south side of Parihaka which serves to limit the prominence of the buildings in the outlook.
 - The dynamic mishmash of boats, masts, and piles in the midground of view that serve to (at least in part) filter views of the built development and provide a seamless context for the proposed marina component of the development.
 - The 'visual fit' for the development suggested by the distinctly urban context and the proximate landform containment.
- 6.19 Although the bulk and massing of building development is larger than that anticipated by the ODP (refer HB Architects Section 2), the overall built form sits comfortably into the riverside setting, largely as a consequence of: the proximate landform backdrop against which it is seen; the carefully considered design of the architecture; and the distinctly urban context from which the outlook is experienced. Putting this latter point another way, it is not unusual to see reasonably large buildings in a city centre riverside context.
- 6.20 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects in relation to this viewing audience are rated as **low** (less than minor).

Viewpoint 2

Viewpoint 2: from the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway/reserve roughly opposite the site.

- 6.21 Refer **Architects Impression: Sculpture Trail (VP2)**. This vantage point is located in the riverside reserve roughly opposite the site and, along with views from the river itself (Viewpoint 9), forms the potentially most affected public view of the site (and development). Viewers are approximately 145m from the site.
- 6.22 As for Viewpoint 1, the site reads as a clutter of dilapidated industrial buildings along the river's edge at the base of the lower slopes of Parihaka.
- 6.23 Scattered houses are visible throughout vegetation-clad slopes behind the site, with the patterning becoming more consistent towards the mid and higher slopes, although the skyline profile is generally uninterrupted by built development (excepting dwellings at western end of The Bluff).
- 6.24 Intervening boats and masts dominate the foreground of view. The reasonably dense patterning of marine craft limits an appreciation of the width of the river with very little open water visible in this outlook (although acknowledging that an appreciation of the breadth of the river is available to the right of view outside of the photograph field of view).
- 6.25 Further, the very close-range movement and dynamism associated with the boats and (to a lesser degree), the river waters serve to attract visual attention in this outlook. The more limited scope for longer-range views from this location

also plays a role in this regard, effectively focussing visual attention on this proximate and visually complex foreground of the outlook.

- 6.26 The proposed development will be seen in the midground of the view, set against the lower vegetated slopes of Mt Parihaka, with the top of the buildings sitting below the vegetated ridgeline.
- 6.27 Whilst an obvious change to the existing outlook, the high-quality design of all aspects of the Ōruku Landing development will ensure that it does not detract from the character or quality of the existing outlook, but rather establishes this portion of the riverscape as an integral and vibrant part of the cityscape.
- 6.28 The foreground clutter of boats and masts will filter views of the development and, to some degree, will serve as a visual distraction through the detail and movement associated with these elements.
- 6.29 Within this visual context, the proposed marina will read as an appropriate transition between the built development and river waters.
- 6.30 Further, the close proximity of the viewer enables a fine-grained appreciation of the high-quality architectural proposals. At this proximity, there is an awareness of the texture and 'feel' of the building materiality which speaks to a series of highly appealing and interesting urban forms. In particular, the varied building arrangement (including: the projected hotel form, the saw toothed Mixed Use Building elevation and the obliquely sited Events Centre), and sympathetic range of materials (including: the glazing, coloured precast concrete, aluminium louvre screens, punched aluminium mesh rain screens, living walls, glass balustrading of the Mixed Use Building; describe Hotel; and the coloured precast concrete corten rain screens and glazing of the Events Centre), will create the impression of a coordinated, albeit interesting and engaging urban grouping.
- 6.31 At this range, there is also an appreciation of the high-quality landscape treatment including an attractive riverside promenade and sophisticated riverside plaza. It is reasonable to expect that, in time, the specimen tree plantings and proposed climber plantings will also make an appreciable contribution to the outlook, serving to soften the overall appearance of the development and visually linking with the vegetated backdrop.
- 6.32 The location of the viewer to the south of the development, together with the site location on the south side of Mt Parihaka means that, for the most part, the new buildings will be seen in shade. This 'condition', along with the visually recessive nature of the building materials will ensure the development tones with the relatively dark, vegetation dominated backdrop and does not read as a dominant or incongruous visual element.
- 6.33 Whilst the bulk and massing of built development seen from this orientation is appreciably larger than that anticipated by the ODP (refer HB Architects Section 1), the overall built form sits comfortably into the wider riverside setting, largely as a consequence of the very high-quality design of the architecture, complemented by an elegant and considered landscape treatment.
- 6.34 Overall, the proposed development will read as a high-quality and visually appropriate new element tucked in along the base of the lower slopes of Mt Parihaka and perched beside the Hātea River. The (unashamed) visibility of this high-quality development along the river's edge will enhance the impression of this part of the Town Basin as an attractive, inviting, and flourishing part of the cityscape.
- 6.35 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects in relation to this viewing audience are rated as **low-moderate** (minor).

Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint 3: From the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway to the southwest of the site.



Viewpoint 3A: From the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway to the southwest of the site. Source: Google Earth.

- 6.36 Also refer **Architects Impression: Hātea Loop Panorama (VP3)**. From this orientation, and at a distance of approximately 180-250m, again, the site is viewed as a collection of tired industrial buildings along the river's edge at the base of the lower slopes of Parihaka. Scattered houses are visible throughout vegetation-clad slopes behind the site, with the patterning becoming more consistent towards the mid and higher slopes. Buildings are seen on the skyline particularly in the vicinity of The Bluff.
- 6.37 The more open waters of the river are seen in the foreground of view with the masts of boats moored and berthed further to the west, seen in the midground backdrop to the left of view.
- 6.38 There is a clear awareness of the urban setting with the string of mixed use buildings lining Reyburn House Lane framing the left of view (NB outside the photographs' field of view).
- 6.39 Intervening riverside plantings serve to filter or screen views of the site from portions of this viewing 'catchment', characterising the outlook to the site for active users of the walkway as 'intermittent'.
- 6.40 It is expected that the proposed development will be seen in the midground of view, set against the vegetated backdrop of the lower slopes of Parihaka. The Hotel building will sit just below the building studded ridgeline backdrop coinciding with The Bluff.
- 6.41 The high-quality architectural and landscape design means that, where visible, the proposed development will not detract from the character or quality of the outlook.
- 6.42 As for Viewpoint 1, the urban context suggests a 'visual fit' for the development.
- 6.43 In a similar vein, the visible boat masts points to a 'fit' for the proposed marina component of the development. From this orientation, the visible boats and masts in the marina will serve to mask the level difference between the riverside promenade and water, which is considered to be beneficial.
- 6.44 Whilst built development may be visible very near the top of the descending ridgeline coinciding with The Bluff, this condition of buildings breaching the skyline is evident elsewhere in the outlook. The use of visually recessive and low reflectivity materials and colours will serve to limit the prominence of built form visible above the skyline.
- 6.45 Although the bulk and massing of built development is larger than that anticipated by the ODP (refer HB Architects Sections 1, 3 and 4 in particular), consistent with the outcome contemplated for Viewpoint 1, the overall built form sits comfortably into the riverside setting, largely as a consequence of: the proximate landform backdrop against which it is seen (and in which built development is clearly visible, including along the skyline); the carefully considered design of the architecture; and the distinctly urban context from which the outlook is experienced.
- 6.46 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects in relation to this viewing audience are rated as **low** (less than minor).

Viewpoint 4



Viewpoint 4: From the footbridge – Kotuitui Whitinga to the south west of the site.



Viewpoint 4A: From the footbridge – Kotuitui Whitinga to the south west of the site. Source: Google Earth.

- 6.47 Also refer **Architects Impression: Hātea Loop Panorama (VP4)**. From this elevated vantage point (on the footbridge), approximately 585m from the site, the site reads as a cluster of industrial buildings at the base of the lower slopes of Mt Parihaka, alongside the river in the backdrop of the view. Riverside and reserve plantings serve to ground views of the buildings on site in places and intervening vegetation (on public land) and buildings serve to screen views of the western end of the site.
- 6.48 Buildings interrupt the vegetated skyline backdrop in places from this orientation.
- 6.49 The open waters of the Raumanga Stream dominate the foreground of view with the open grassed expanse of Hihiaua Park forming the mid ground of view. Urban development frames the left of view and there is an appreciation of the wider cityscape, including the clutter of industrial development around Herekino Street.
- 6.50 The proposed development will be seen partially screened and filtered by intervening vegetation and buildings. The top of the buildings will sit below the vegetated skyline backdrop from this elevated vantage point. Each of these factors is considered to assist the successful integration of the development into the outlook.
- 6.51 Distance will contribute a moderating effect. By this, it is meant that at this sort of distance, despite the scale and bulk of the development, it will be seen within a wide cityscape panorama and therefore will not form a prominent or discordant visual element.
- 6.52 In addition, the elevated nature of the viewer means that there is a reduced appreciation of the development control infringements for this audience.
- 6.53 Importantly, where visible, the high-quality design of all aspects of the development will ensure that it contributes positively to the outlook.
- 6.54 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects in relation to this viewing audience are rated as **very low** (less than minor).

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Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint 5: From the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway on the north side of the Hātea River and adjacent Pohe Island Road.

- 6.55 Also refer **Architects Impression: Hātea Loop Panorama (VP5)**. From this location (approximately 600m from the site), the character of the outlook is very similar to that described for Viewpoint 4, albeit with the orientation and elevation of the viewer affording a greater appreciation of the river corridor.
- 6.56 Consistent with Viewpoint 4, the site currently reads as part of the general clutter of buildings along this portion of the river front.
- 6.57 Buildings are discernible scattered throughout the vegetation-clad lower slopes of Parihaka (including on the skyline), and the middle of boats and masts at Riverside Drive Marina (east of the site) are also seen to the right of view (noting that the extent of visibility of this marina increases when viewers are further to the east on the path).
- 6.58 The proposed development will be seen in the mid to background of the view, set against the vegetated backdrop of the lower slopes of Mt Parihaka. Layered behind this ridgeline are the elevated landforms to the northwest of Whāngārei City (Pukenui Forest environs), which form a distant backdrop in views from this orientation.
- 6.59 The following factors serve to ensure that the proposed development is not visually dominant and integrates successfully into the outlook (in no order of importance), despite the development control infringements:
- the 'diminishing' influence of distance;
 - the mid range and more distant landform backdrop against which the development will be viewed;
 - the high-quality design of all aspects of the proposed development;
 - the 'visual fit' provided by the wider cityscape and marina context for development of the nature proposed;
 - the visually recessive and low reflectivity characteristics of the building materiality; and
 - the filtering effects of the proposed tree plantings throughout the eastern end of the site.
- 6.60 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects in relation to this viewing audience are rated as **low to low-moderate** (less than minor to minor).



Viewpoint 5A: From the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway on the north side of the Hātea River and adjacent Pohe Island Road. (The Viewpoint 4 footbridge – Kotuitui Whitinga is seen to the centre left of view.)

Viewpoint 6

Viewpoint 6: from the Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway on the north side of the Hātea River at 50 Riverside Drive (reserve land).

- 6.61 Also refer **Architects Impression: Riverside Park**. The existing industrial buildings on the site are not visible from this vantage point.
- 6.62 The proposed development will be glimpsed above the boatsheds in the midground of view.
- 6.63 The very limited extent of built form seen together with the visually recessive character of the building, and the dark, vegetated landform backdrop (coinciding with The Bluff ridgeline) against which it is seen, will mean that the proposed development is barely discernible in this outlook.
- 6.64 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects in relation to this viewing audience are rated as **very low** (less than minor).

Viewpoint 7

Viewpoint 7: From the Hātea River.

- 6.65 The site is visible at a range of distances from the river, and reads as a clutter of dilapidated industrial buildings along the river's edge at the toe of the lower, 'settled' slopes of Parihaka.
- 6.66 The character of the outlook is generally as described in the preceding viewpoints, with the prominence of the site increasing as one moves closer to the site. Importantly, there is an awareness of the wider cityscape context in such views and the clutter of moored and berthed boats is an integral part of the character of the riverscape.
- 6.67 In closer range views, a detailed appreciation of the high-quality design of all aspects of the Ōruku Landing development will ensure that, despite the development control infringements, the proposal does not detract from the character or quality of the existing outlook, but rather establishes this portion of the riverscape as an integral and vibrant part of the cityscape.
- 6.68 The proposed marina will read as an appropriate transition between the built development and river waters.
- 6.69 In mid and longer-range views, the integrating benefits of the vegetated landform backdrop and visually recessive/low reflectivity materials palette, diminishing influence of distance, and intervening masts will come into play.
- 6.70 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects in relation to this viewing audience are rated as **low to low-moderate** (less than minor to minor).



Viewpoint 7: From the Hātea River. Source: 4Sight Consulting.

Viewpoint 8



Viewpoint 8: Typical character of the toe of (Parihaka) slope residences addressed in this viewpoint discussion. Also refer HB Architects Sections and Section Location Plan and HB Architects Northern Elevations for the Mixed Use, Hotel and Events Centre buildings.

6.71 This viewing audience includes: 1, 1A, 4, 14A, 18, and 18A Punga Grove Avenue; and 24, 29, 31 33, 35, 41, 43 and 43A Riverside Drive. Referencing Google Earth imagery, WDC aerial photography and relying on field work, it would appear that many of the dwellings along the toe of the lower slopes of Mt Parihaka (and effectively fronting Riverside Drive) have mature vegetation along their road frontage. Further, it would seem that very few of these properties have outdoor living areas on their southern side. It is therefore considered that the outlook of these properties, in the direction of the application site, whilst a component of the visual amenity of those properties, is not itself significant.

6.72 For those dwellings with views of the site, it is expected that the area currently reads as a relatively unsightly jumble of industrial buildings and yards beyond the busy dual carriageway of Riverside Drive. It is possible that some dwellings have views of the river through gaps between the existing buildings.

6.73 Where visible, the proposed development will be seen at relatively close range, with the proposed high-quality built development replacing the somewhat run down industrial development that is in existence at present. The retained

specimen trees along the Riverside Drive frontage will filter and soften views of the new development. In time, the proposed 'infill' pohutukawa plantings along this frontage will augment this filtering effect.

- 6.74 Although the bulk and massing of building development is larger than that anticipated by the ODP (refer HB Architects Sections), for the majority of properties, buildings in keeping with the Plan provisions would serve to obscure views of the river (and broader cityscape). For dwellings along the 'upper limit' of this audience (i.e. 1A and 18A Punga Grove Avenue which are slightly further up the slope) it is possible that the far southern edge of the river corridor may be seen, together with the adjacent cityscape. The proposed development may obscure at least part of this view, including visibility of the southern river edge. This potential disbenefit (in the limited instances where it may be relevant), is outweighed by the improvement to visual amenity provided by the high quality of the comprehensive Ōruku Landing development.
- 6.75 The shading analysis undertaken by HB Architects demonstrates that the proposal will not generate adverse shading effects in relation to this audience. Further, the mix of uses proposed, together with the building orientations and design, will ensure that there are no issues with respect to privacy and overlooking.
- 6.76 With respect to issues of visual dominance, the considered design of the northern elevations of all of the proposed buildings seen at a minimum distance of 40m, in conjunction with the retention of existing mature pohutukawa specimens along the Riverside Drive frontage of the site (excepting two), and their augmentation with new specimens will ensure the proposed built development is not overbearing or intrusive for this audience.
- 6.77 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects in relation to this viewing audience are expected to rate as **low** (less than minor) reducing to **very low** once the proposed plantings have attained a height of approximately 8 metres.

Viewpoint 9



Viewpoint 9: Typical character of outlook from the mid slope residences. (NB Photograph taken from street near 5A Punga Grove Avenue.) Also refer HB Architects Sections and Section Location Plan and HB Architects Northern Elevations for the Mixed Use, Hotel and Events Centre buildings.

- 6.78 This viewing audience includes: 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 The Bluff; and 3, 3A, 5, 5A, 6, 6A, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 20 and 22 Punga Grove Avenue. Referencing Google Earth imagery, WDC aerial photography and relying on field work, it would appear that some of the dwellings throughout the mid slopes of this lower portion of Parihaka would appear to have outdoor living spaces on their southern and western sides. However, for many, mature vegetation along their southern / western side is expected to limit visibility of the site.
- 6.79 For those dwellings with views of the site, it is expected that the area currently reads as a relatively unsightly jumble of industrial buildings and yards beyond the busy dual carriageway of Riverside Drive and seen within a broader visually complex panorama that takes in the river and cityscape. It is possible that some dwellings have views of the river through gaps between buildings and that part of the river adjacent the site is visible beyond the industrial development.
- 6.80 The outlooks from these properties, are expected to read as relatively expansive, but in some instances will be interrupted by vegetation and structures. Whilst these outlooks are a component of visual amenity for each of the properties, the importance of the existing outlooks to the amenity of each property will vary. Given the wide views, topography and complexity of the existing outlooks; the application site, is not itself, considered to be a significant component of the visual amenity.
- 6.81 Where visible, the proposed development will be seen at relatively close range with the proposed high-quality built development replacing the somewhat down-at-heel industrial development that is in existence at present.
- 6.82 Although the bulk and massing of building development is larger than that anticipated by the ODP (refer HB Architects cross sections), the high quality design of the built form which includes a green roof to the Hotel and visually recessive roofing materials for the Mixed Use and Events Centre buildings, will ensure that it does not detract from the outlook. As the Viewpoint 9 photograph demonstrates, from this elevation on the lower slopes of Parihaka, there is an appreciation of the broader river and cityscape, beyond the immediate periphery of the site. So whilst the development may obscure more of the 'immediate river corridor than would occur for a development that complies with the Plan standards, the engaging longer range riverscape/cityscape panorama will remain unchanged.
- 6.83 Further, although the development may reduce visibility of parts of the river for these audiences, this potential disbenefit (in the limited instances where it may be relevant) is outweighed by the improvement to visual amenity provided by the high quality of the comprehensive Ōruku Landing development.
- 6.84 The shading analysis undertaken by HB Architects demonstrates that the proposal will not generate adverse shading effects in relation to this audience. Further, the mix of uses proposed, together with the building orientations and design, will ensure that there are no issues with respect to privacy and overlooking.
- 6.85 With respect to issues of visual dominance, the sympathetic design of the northern elevations of all of the proposed buildings seen at a minimum distance of 85m, in conjunction with the retention of existing mature pohutukawa specimens along the Riverside Drive frontage of the site (excepting two), their augmentation with new specimens and the visually recessive character of the building rooftop treatments will ensure the proposed built development is not overbearing or intrusive for this audience.
- 6.86 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects in relation to this viewing audience are expected to rate as **very low** through to **low** (less than minor) depending on the extent of development that is visible from the dwelling.

Viewpoint 10

Viewpoint 10: from the elevated slope residences.

- 6.87 From dwellings throughout the elevated slopes of the lower portion of Mt Parihaka (24, 25, 25A, 26, 27, 27A, 27B, 28, 29, 29A, 29B, 29C, 29D, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 34A, 36, 37, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50 and 52 Punga Grove Avenue), intervening vegetation and the steep landform profile is expected to significantly limit visibility of the site. It is also expected that the focus of the outlook from these elevated properties is out over the cityscape.
- 6.88 Where glimpsed, the proposed development will form a very minor component of the outlook. The proposed green roofs will ensure that it is not visually prominent or dominant in such views.
- 6.89 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects in relation to this viewing audience are rated as **very low** (less than minor).

NIGHT-TIME VIEWS

- 6.90 The proposed development will be visible from many of these locations at night. It is understood that a condition will be offered requiring all lighting fixtures to be fitted with covers or reflectors to direct light to the ground and shield the light source to prevent glare.
- 6.91 In views from the south west (Town Basin environs), south and south east (includes walkway, Hātea Loop – Huarahi o te Whai walkway, and river vantage points), the development will display a 'lantern' type effect that signalling the northern riverside as a part of the dynamic Town Basin hub.
- 6.92 The confinement of the development to sit well below the vegetation clad ridgeline backdrop, means that this strong 'natural' silhouette will remain intact on moonlit evenings. The night-time view modelled for Viewpoint 1 illustrates this outcome.
- 6.93 In views from the north (lower slopes of Parihaka), the lighting associated with the development will largely be obscured by the proposed buildings and light covers. That said, where the site is visible, there is likely to be an increased awareness of lighting over that currently associated with the existing dilapidated industrial buildings on the site. It is expected that this change would also be associated with development that is in keeping with the Plan standards.
- 6.94 On balancing these considerations, adverse visual effects associated with night-time views are rated as **very low** (less than minor).

NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS

- 6.95 As explained in Section 2, and typical of a dilapidated reclaimed industrial site and setting within the centre of a city, the site and its immediate context display natural character values that rate toward the lower end of the spectrum.
- 6.96 That said, the key elements of the landscape that contribute to the natural character values in and around the site include: the waters of the Hātea River; the vegetation-clad volcanic landform of Parihaka; and the various specimen and wilding pohutukawas around the margins of the site. It is also acknowledged that both the Hātea and Parihaka play an important role in contributing a sense of 'natural relief' within the cityscape which speaks to the experiential aspects of natural character.
- 6.97 The proposed development will not impact on the vegetation-clad landform of Parihaka.
- 6.98 The proposal to retain the pōhutukawa specimens around the margins of the site is sympathetic with the intentions of maintaining natural character.
- 6.99 With respect to the experiential aspects of natural character associated with Parihaka and the role it plays in providing a sense of 'natural relief', the proposed landscape treatment will see the introduction of an extensive and coordinated, locally appropriate and eco-sourced planting strategy throughout the site. This includes indigenous specimen tree planting, coastal shrub and groundcover plantings, living wall treatments to buildings using indigenous species, and green roof treatments to the Hotel and part of the Mixed Use Building. In so doing, the proposal will enhance the perceived connection of the site with the bush-clad flanks of Parihaka.
- 6.100 The configuration of the development to allow views from the south through the site via the plaza to Parihaka also supports the connection between the immediate cityscape and the maunga.
- 6.101 Whilst the development will introduce structures and boats into the river itself, this form of development is a well-established part of the character of this stretch of the Hātea. This 'contextual fit' is of importance in ensuring that the development does not detract from the experiential aspects of natural character associated with the river and the role it plays in providing 'natural relief' for the city.
- 6.102 More particularly, the proposed riverside promenade, activation of adjacent public spaces and publicly accessible floating pontoons will enhance the public accessibility to, and experience of, this stretch of the Hātea River, suggesting a benefit to the experiential aspects of natural character associated with the river. The high-quality design of all aspects of the development plays a critical role in this regard, as it will see the transformation of this portion of the riverscape into an area that is cherished by the community.
- 6.103 The introduction of ropes to allow oyster colonisation suggests a benefit to the marine ecology aspects of natural character (noting that it is beyond landscape architectural expertise to comment with respect to the scale of such a benefit).
- 6.104 The introduction of a comprehensive tree, shrub and groundcover planting strategy using locally appropriate eco-sourced indigenous species suggests a benefit to the biophysical aspects of natural character.
- 6.105 On balancing these considerations, adverse natural character effects (within the scope of landscape expertise) are assessed to be **low** (less than minor) reducing to **very low** in the medium to long term as the proposed plantings establish (after approximately 5 years).

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 6.106 The preceding discussion of natural character effects demonstrates that the proposed development will not adversely impact on the terrestrial **biophysical** aspects of landscape character.
- 6.107 The discussion of visual effects establishes that the development will not detract from the visual amenity currently enjoyed in this part of Whāngārei city. Together with the preceding discussion of the experiential aspects of natural character, these findings demonstrate that the proposed development will not detract from the **sensory** aspects of landscape character.
- 6.108 Turning to the **associative** aspects of landscape character, the clear legibility of the development as a primarily public-focussed development as a consequence of the Events Centre, plaza, and promenade spaces, and to a lesser degree, the Hotel uses, suggests a visual logic for buildings of this scale. The close proximity of the development to the Town Basin cultural and marine hub also plays a role in this regard.
- 6.109 In essence, the site location and high-quality design of all aspects of Ōruku Landing are the key landscape (and visual) mitigation tools for this development.
- 6.110 Although the bulk and massing of building development is larger than that anticipated by the OWDP and the WDPC, the overall built form sits comfortably into the riverside setting, largely as a consequence of:
- a. the proximate landform backdrop against which it is seen, and which serves to frame and 'contain' the buildings;
 - b. the limited change that the development makes to the character and quality of the outlook enjoyed from nearby residential dwellings on the lower flanks of Parihaka when compared to the development outcome anticipated on the site under the OWDP or WDPC;
 - c. the proximity of the development to the Town Basin, existing marina, and boat mooring areas with a busy dual carriageway along its northern side; and
 - d. the carefully considered and high-quality design of the architecture and landscape treatment.
- 6.111 The proposed development will inject vitality into a somewhat forgotten and undervalued part of the city centre's riverscape, enhancing the perception of the Town Basin as a vibrant, attractive, and thriving riverside hub.
- 6.112 On balance, landscape effects are assessed to be **low** (less than minor) reducing to **very low** in the medium to long term as the proposed plantings establish (after approximately 5 years).

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7. Assessment Against Relevant Statutory Criteria

- 7.1 The preceding discussion of natural character effects demonstrates that the proposal will:
- preserve natural character (noting that the existing level of natural character of the site and immediate surrounds rates towards the lower end of the spectrum);
 - avoid significant adverse effects on natural character and other natural features; and
 - maintain the natural character of the local environment. The improved experiential qualities of the site following its development suggest an enhancement with respect to this aspect of natural character values.
- 7.2 From the effects discussion, it is evident that the development will not detract from the values of the ONL and ONF associated with Parihaka, noting that each of these overlays apply to parts of Parihaka that are spatially very well separated from the site (both horizontally and vertically). In particular, the visual effects analysis reveals that the legibility of Parihaka as a prominent 'natural' landmark will not be compromised by the proposal.
- 7.3 The proposed structures in the CMA which include the riverside promenade, publicly accessible floating pontoons, and marina are assessed to be appropriate as a consequence of their contextual fit and sympathetic design.
- 7.4 The publicly accessible nature of the majority of the external spaces that form part of the development, together with the promenade and pontoon components, are consistent with the policy approach to encourage public accessibility to and along the CMA.
- 7.5 The effects discussion also demonstrates that the proposal will:
- Maintain landscape and visual amenity values generally and more specifically in relation to the green spaces in the local area. The discussion of visual effects in relation Viewpoints 1-7 are instructive in this regard.
 - Maintain the privacy and visual amenity enjoyed by residential properties throughout the lower slopes of Parihaka (bearing in mind the level of development change anticipated on the site under the WDP and WDPC), as demonstrated in the discussion of visual effects in relation to Viewpoints 8, 9 and 10.
 - Visually integrate into the streetscape of Riverside Drive, thereby avoiding the impression of a visually dominant development. The architectural design, retention of existing mature pohutukawa street tree specimens, and addition of new pohutukawa specimens along this frontage are key to this outcome.
- 7.6 The development will see the enhancement of the landscape and visual amenity of the site and will promote the visual and physical integration of the area with the Town Basin precinct. The landmark and high-quality design of all aspects of the development and introduction of ferry services facilitated by the development underpin these benefits.
- 7.7 The development has been carefully designed to allow views through the plaza to the lower slopes of Parihaka from the riverside promenade, the river itself and the riverside reserve and cityscape to the south.
- 7.8 The generous scale of publicly accessible open space areas, and in particular, the riverside promenade, will promote a sense of openness.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 In conclusion, the carefully considered siting, configuration and design of the proposed development, including the landscape treatment, will ensure that the development sits comfortably within this city centre riverside setting.
- 8.2 On balance, the proposal will give rise to adverse visual amenity, natural character and landscape effects that are 'no more than minor' in relation to the wider setting. Adverse visual amenity effects in relation to nearby residential properties are assessed to be 'less than minor'.
- 8.3 Further, the proposal is consistent with national, regional, and district-level objectives and policies that seek to appropriately manage the visual amenity, natural character and landscape values of this part of Whāngārei City.

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Appendix 1: Assessment of ‘Landscape’ Effects Methodology

GENERAL

Landscape and visual impacts result from natural or induced change in the components, character, or quality of landscape. Usually these are the result of landform or vegetation modification or the introduction of new structures, activities, or facilities into the landscape.

Landscape effects include effects on topographic, vegetative, and hydrological features. Landscape effects also refer to impacts on settlement patterns, historic and cultural features, and the general landscape character or ‘sense of place’ of an area.

It is generally accepted that the consideration of landscape effects embraces the following three broad components:

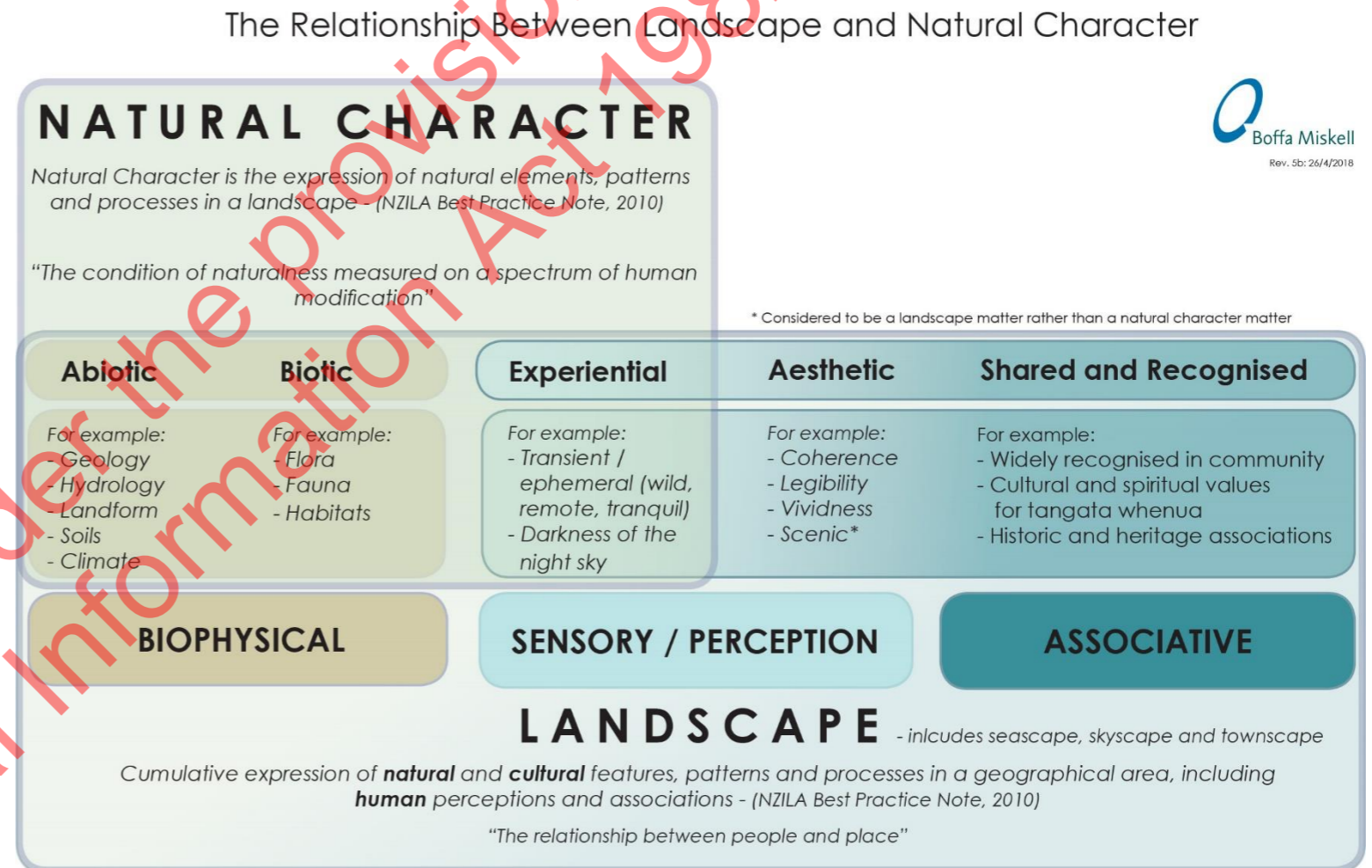
- Biophysical attributes (the natural science aspects)
- Sensory attributes (the experience of the landscape)
- Associative attributes (the meaning of the landscape)

Adverse impacts upon landscape values typically arise where discontinuity or discord is evident between what is proposed, and both the existing environment which provides its setting and the environment foreseeable in terms of the District Plan. In this instance, the main concerns in relation to any discontinuity or discord arise from the effects of the proposed development on the character of this part of the Whāngārei cityscape.

Visual effects form a component of landscape effects, influencing both the sensory and associative attributes of landscape. This assessment analyses the potential visual effects that may be generated by the proposal and is based on:

- the background and context within which the development would be viewed;
- the proportion of the built form (including earthworks) that will be visible, determined by the observer’s position relative to the objects being viewed;
- the number and type of viewers and their location in relation to the site; and
- the ability to integrate structures and activities with mitigation planting.

Natural character effects are related to landscape effects and sit beneath the broad umbrella that is landscape effects. The diagram below prepared by Boffa Miskell demonstrates the interrelationship between the two.



EFFECTS RATINGS

Effect Rating	Use and Definition
Very High:	Total loss of key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. amounts to a complete change of landscape character in views.
High:	Major modification or loss of most key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. little of the pre-development landscape character remains and a major change in views. <i>Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition</i> <i>High: adjective - Great in amount, value, size, or intensity.</i>
Moderate - High:	Modifications of several key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. the pre-development landscape character remains evident but materially changed and prominent in views.
Moderate:	Partial loss of or modification to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. new elements may be prominent in views but not necessarily uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape. <i>Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition</i> <i>Moderate: adjective - average in amount, intensity, quality or degree</i>
Moderate - Low:	Minor loss of or modification to one or more key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. new elements are not prominent within views or uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
Low:	Little material loss of or modification to key elements / features / characteristics. i.e. modification or change is not uncharacteristic or prominent within views and absorbed within the receiving landscape. <i>Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition</i> <i>Low: adjective - 1. Below average in amount, extent, or intensity.</i>
Very Low:	Negligible loss of or modification to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. approximating a 'no change' situation and a negligible change in views.

For the purposes of evaluating the need for notification, it is generally regarded that adverse effects rated as **Moderate** or higher correspond to a 'more than minor' effect. Effects rated as **Moderate-Low** correspond to a 'minor' effect and effects rated as **Low** and **Very Low** correspond to a 'less than minor' effect. Effects rated as **High** or **Very High** correspond to a 'significant' adverse effect.

Less than Minor		Minor	More than Minor			
Very Low	Low	Moderate - Low	Moderate	Moderate - High	High	Very High
					Significant¹	

Table 1: Determining minor effects for notification determination and non-complying activities (Source: Boffa Miskell)

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¹ To be used only about Policy 13(1)(b) and Policy 15(b) of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS), where the test is 'to avoid significant adverse effects'.