

PROPOSED RANGITANE BOATRAMP/PARKING RECLAMATION

Initial commentary on landscape, visual amenity and natural character effects

Littoralis Landscape Architecture has been engaged by Far North Holdings Limited to contribute to the design and consenting of a new public boat launching facility at Rangitane on the northern shore of the mid reaches of the Kerikeri Inlet. This brief summary has been prepared to outline the nature of the site, the conceptual design measures adopted to minimise and mitigate potential adverse effects upon landscape, visual amenity and natural character, and the broad nature of those potential effects. It should be noted that a formal assessment has not yet been conducted, so these observations should be treated as an overview and preliminary.

The project has been conceived to provide superior facilities at a popular trailer-boating launch site, including vehicle and trailer parking. Topography, water depths and land ownership patterns in the area mean that building the facility seaward from the shoreline in the form of a reclamation is the only practicable approach to cater for the increasing demand for launching in this area.

Rangitane is a small, long-established residential settlement that lies immediately above the northern shore of the Kerikeri Inlet. Many of the homes enjoy a view out over the Inlet and beyond, with the few situated on the lowest slopes often having a strong relationship with the adjacent shore. Roughly 150m of Rangitane Loop Road skirts the coast alongside these lower buildings and is edged by a fringe of mature pohutukawa, punctuated by periodic gaps.

An existing jetty (scheduled for replacement), small boat launching ramp and casual dinghy storage for a string of boats moored offshore lie beside the lowest part of Rangitane Loop Road (and immediately upstream of the proposed reclamation). During busy weekends, vehicles and trailers typically line the edges of this part of the road whilst boaters take to the sea.

Predictably, the part of the Kerikeri Inlet that is immediately associated with Rangitane settlement is not noted for elevated landscape or natural character values. The coast and small islands downstream are in a more intact state and therefore have higher (but well short of outstanding) values of these types. This wider setting has been recognised as being potentially influenced by the proposal, along with possible impact upon the visual amenity of those in the settlement, so a range of measures have been incorporated into the conceptual proposal in an effort to minimise and mitigate potential impacts. These include:

- Positioning the reclamation to avoid impacting the small beach alongside.
- Configuring the area to run along the coast, rather than providing a double rank of parking that would push the filled area further seaward (this option was explored and discarded).

- Arranging the reclamation to ensure that the pohutukawa alongside the road are conserved in an uncompromised state, including positioning of the entrance to utilise an existing gap in those trees.
- Allocating further tree planting to the outer rim of the reclamation to echo the “natural” shoreline vegetation.
- In association with those trees, incorporating an extensive fringe of indigenous coastal riparian planting that would spill down the armoured face to approximately MHWS level.
- Ensuring that possible lighting (if any) is discrete and doesn’t dominate the night outlook to or along the Inlet.

In addition to these approaches being configured to manage potential effects, they also have a role in heightening the amenity of users. Additional features that are intended to further benefit users are:

- Integrating the rebuilt jetty into the reclamation – if practicable and aligning with consenting processes etc.
- Providing for a perimeter walkway that skirts the entire reclamation.
- A measure of visitor car parking.
- Picnic facilities.
- Incorporating a dinghy rack and related access for launching/retrieving off the beach.

Collectively, these design approaches are anticipated to significantly limit potential adverse effects in a setting that is considerably shaped by the long-existing settlement that is draped over the spur associated with Rangitane Loop Road.

Mike Farrow Principal registered landscape architect

LITTORALIS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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