



Memorandum

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Attention: Catherine Stuart

Company: Southern Parallel Sports Campus

Date: 27/10/2022

From: Yvonne Pfluger

Message Ref: Preliminary landscape/ visual effects assessment

Project No: BM220807 Southern Parallel Sports Campus

Introduction

Boffa Miskell Limited (BML) have been engaged by Southern Parallel Sports Campus (SPSC) to prepare a preliminary landscape, natural character, and visual amenity assessment for the proposed Southern Parallel Sports and Equestrian Centre to inform the application for a Fast-track consent process. A design has been developed with refinements to the layout based on recommendations by the project team, including layout changes to minimise visual effects.

The property where the SPSC is proposed (referred to as 'the Site', see graphic attachment Fig 1) is located at Lake Hood, approximately 7 kilometres south-west of Ashburton. The wider Site context is characterised by large blocks of open paddocks and intervening established exotic shelter belts. Land use in the wider rural area is largely crop and dairy farming, and structures and buildings such as pivot irrigators, sheds, farmhouses, and silos are common features within this landscape.

Neighbouring the Site is Lake Hood settlement south-west of Ashburton township which contains a well-established subdivision and an expansion area currently undergoing construction. The development adjoins the shores of the artificially formed lake, with many of the properties within the development having direct access to the waterfront. The development includes large areas of reserve, a golf course, rowing lanes, water ski lanes, and a café and restaurant.

The Site is bound by Stranges Road to the west and Huntingdon Avenue to the north and is adjacent to the public reserve along the western shores of Lake Hood. The Site has a flat topography and is currently used for pastoral farming, with a residential farm building and pivot irrigators present. There are two unnamed tributaries of Carters Creek which pass through the Site. Extending in a north-south direction through the Site is an intermittent stream. The incised stream is largely grassed, with established flax/ harakeke present in the northern reaches. To the west is a permanent water course and the second unnamed tributary of Carters Creek which passes through the Site. The water course intersects with an existing water race on the western boundary of the Site before the confluence immediately north of the existing farm dwelling on the Site. The stream then passes through the southern boundary of the Site above the confluence with Carters Creek

The existing farmhouse and associated curtilage including farm sheds is located in the central part of the Site, with driveway access from Stranges Road. The eastern boundary of the Site is framed by a mature poplar shelter belt along the terrace edge in the reserve and a large exotic conifer shelter belt on the SPSC land to the south. From the eastern boundary there is access to the Lake Hood rowing lanes and golf course

at the south-western end of the lake. From the Site views of the Southern Alps are also available and form the backdrop to the Site and wider context.

Proposal Description

The proposal is a 65-hectare joint venture comprising a sports campus and international standard equestrian and equine centre. The Site is divided into two parts comprising the 35-hectare Southern Parallel Sports Campus to the north and the 30-hectare Southern Parallel Equestrian Centre in the south. The Sports Campus will contain two sport facility buildings with a Sprung design (see architectural drawings), each 17 metres in height, 48 metres in width, and 100 metres in length, and several sports fields. Within the Sprung Facilities is an indoor sports field, indoor courts, a high-performance gym, mezzanine running track, and therapy pools. Connecting the two facilities is a cafeteria, several management offices, and drop off zone for visitors and is for private access only. The design of the facilities includes a gabled roof form made of white material, while the lower portion/walls will be a mixture of glazing or semi-translucent material.

To the north-east of the Sports Campus, thirty-two, four-bedroom townhouses are proposed and are orientated to the north-east towards Lake Hood. These are accessed from Huntingdon Avenue and are to be used as accommodation for the participants in the campus programme. The design of the single-storey buildings will be based on a consistent palette of materials that will be applied to the buildings across the campus to achieve a legible and coherent built form. The materials will include plaster, off-form concrete, stone, dark coloured profiled metal and timber claddings.

The Equestrian Centre in the southern part of the Site will contain one similar-sized Sprung Facility (138.2 metres in length) housing an indoor arena. The centre will also include a covered dressage arena, horse stables, veterinary facility, a public café and restaurant, motel, two polo fields and extensive car and float parking. Primary access to the Site is proposed from Stranges Road with service vehicle access from Huntingdon Avenue.

The intermittent stream and permanent watercourse within the Site are proposed to be retained and enhanced as part of the proposal. In addition, a retention basin is proposed on the true left of the northern unnamed tributary between the townhouses and Sports Campus.

Assessment of Landscape Effects (Preliminary Proposal)

This memorandum has been prepared in accordance with Te Tangi a Te Manu, the NZILA best practice guidance¹. The key matters which will be outlined in this preliminary assessment include:

- *Landscape effects including effects on rural character.*
- *Natural Character effects on local streams and Lake Hood.*
- *Visual Amenity effects from private and public viewpoints.*

A site visit was undertaken by Yvonne Pfluger, and Hannah Wilson on Wednesday 24th August, to appraise the Site and the wider context, and to take Site photographs. A second site visit was undertaken on Wednesday 31st August by Hannah Wilson to take further photographs of showing the proposed height of the Sprung Facilities (17 metres). Both site visits were undertaken in sunny weather with good visibility. Due to the winter season trees were not in leaf, aiding the visual assessment.

Visual Effects

The Visual Effects Assessment below is based on the on-site findings in combination with review of the layout plans provided. In order to describe the visual effects representative viewpoints were visited (see Figures Graphic attachment) and the extent of visibility of key structures proposed within the SPSC is described below. Distances to the Sprung facilities are indicated, as these will be the highest structures on

¹ Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines', July, 2022

Site with the widest zone of visual influence. The assessment takes into account existing and proposed development, including mitigation planting on the Site and existing vegetation surrounding it.

Representative views from public viewpoints have been summarised in the table below and findings are illustrated with photographs in the accompanying Graphic Supplement.

Location	Address Location	Distance to closest Sprung Facility (approx.) ²	Extent of visibility ³	Significance of Visual Effect ⁴	Comment
NORTH	Site Context Photograph 1: Intersection of Huntingdon Avenue and Stranges Road.	460m	Partial	Moderate	Views from the intersection of Huntingdon Avenue and Stranges Road will be partially screened by intervening vegetation and the raised embankment on the north-western corner of the Site. Partial, mid distance views of the Sprung Facilities associated with the Sports Campus will be available from this viewpoint, as well as long distance glimpsed views of the townhouses.
	Site Context Photograph 2: Huntingdon Avenue (in front of storage facility)	420m	Partial	Moderate	Views from Huntingdon Avenue will be partially screened by intervening vegetation and the raised embankment to the north of the Site. Partial, mid-distance views will be available of the proposed Sprung Facilities associated with the Sports Campus. Partial short-distance views of the townhouses will also be available from this viewpoint.
	Site Context Photograph 3: The Village Green.	580m	Partial	Low - Moderate	Views from the intersection of Huntingdon Avenue and the entrance to the Village Green subdivision will be partially screened by intervening proposed vegetation. Partial views of the proposed townhouses will be available from this viewpoint, as well as mid to long-distance partial views of the Sprung Facility associated with the Sports Campus.
EAST	Site Context Photograph 4: Lake Hood Drive (low-lying viewpoint)	550m	Partial	Low	Views from Lake Hood Drive are low lying and partially screened by an existing poplar shelter belt and the intervening terrace edge. Mid-distance, partial views of the townhouses and filtered, long-distance glimpsed views of the Sprung Facilities associated with the Sports Campus will be available from this viewpoint.
WEST	Site Context Photograph 5: Stranges Road (south).	410m	Partial	Moderate	Views from the south-western corner of the Site from Stranges Road are likely to be partially screened by intervening proposed vegetation allowing for filtered views of the equestrian centre. Partial mid-distance views across the proposed polo fields to the Sprung Facility associated with the Equestrian Centre will be available from this viewpoint. As the viewer approaches, the effects would increase to moderate-high in short-distance views to the Sprung Facilities (see VP6).
	Site Context Photograph 6: Maginness Road.	200m	Partial	Moderate-High	Partial views of the Site, including the short-distance, side-on views of the three Sprung Facilities will be available from Maginness Road. Views will be filtered through proposed clusters of trees and vegetation, and partially screened by the raised embankments on the western boundary of the Site. Glimpsed views of the townhouses are also likely to be available from this viewpoint.
	Site Context Photograph 7: Grahams Road (long distance view).	1,000m	Partial	Low	Partial views of the Site will be available from Grahams Road between intervening shelterbelts. This will include long distance views of the three Sprung Facilities and vegetation associated with the western boundary of the Site.

² Estimated from edge of house to nearest proposed building from ArcGIS

³ Extent of visibility: Open (all or a significant part of the proposal is visible); Partial (part of the proposal is visible); Glimpse (small part visible); None (no views obtained)

⁴ Significance of Visual Effect: Very High/ High/ Moderate-High/ Moderate/ Moderate-Low/ Low/ Very Low.

NORTH	Site Context Photograph 8: Stranges Road (north).	1,100m	Partial	Low	Partial views of the Site will be available from the north of Stranges Road. This will include the northern face of the Sprung Facility associated with the Sports Campus, and the intervening embankment and clustered planting on the northern boundary of the Site.
EAST	Site Context Photograph 9: From the Lake House carpark.	1,300m	Glimpsed	Low	Glimpsed views of the Site will be available from the Lake House carpark. This is primarily towards the southern area of the Site which includes the polo fields and the covered dressage arena. Glimpses of the eastern Sprung Facilities are likely to be visible from this viewpoint, although filtered through clusters of vegetation on the eastern boundary of the Site.
	Site Context Photograph 10: Lake Hood Walkway.	680m	Partial	Moderate	Partial views of the Site are available from the Lake Hood walkway. Views will be partially filtered by clusters of exotic trees and vegetation on the eastern boundary of the Site; however, partial views of the Sprung Facilities will remain available. Glimpsed views of the townhouses will be available between the clusters of exotic tree planting.

The table above outlines that partial to glimpsed views of the Site will be available from several representative public viewpoints within the immediate context and at mid-distances. Long-distance views are largely curtailed by intervening vegetation, in the form of shelterbelts across the flat terrain of the agricultural landscape.

Partial views of the Site are available for properties to the north of the Site and road users approaching from Stranges Road and travelling on Huntingdon Avenue. While houses to the north of the Site are largely orientated to the north-west, views of the northern face of the SPSC Sprung Facilities will be a prominent feature when approaching the Site from the north or south. Views will be filtered by a proposed raised embankment and clusters of exotic trees and native vegetation on the northern side. Partial views of the townhouses will also be available from Huntingdon Avenue and the Village Green Subdivision.

The viewing audience to the east of the Site encompasses the Lake Hood subdivision development including the café/restaurant and public walkway. Viewpoint on the eastern side of the Site are lower lying and view will be curtailed by the intervening terrace edge that the property boundary follows. In addition, views will be filtered by proposed clusters of exotic trees and native vegetation on the eastern boundary of the site. The existing poplars on reserve land will provide immediate screening until proposed mitigation planting matures. Partial views of the Site will be available from this viewing audience, including partial views of the townhouses and the eastern end of the SPSC Sprung Facilities.

Views from the west of the Site encompass properties and users of local rural roads such as Grahams Road, and Maginness Road. Partial views of the Site are available for the viewing audience to the west of the Site, including users of Stranges Road approaching from the south. While views are filtered through proposed clusters of exotic trees and native vegetation and a raised embankment on the western boundary of the Site, short and intermittent long-distance views of the Sprung Facilities will be available. Glimpsed long distance views of the townhouses may also be available for this viewing audience.

In summary, the visual effects from short-distance viewpoints in the immediate vicinity of the Site will be moderate to high where the Sprung Facilities will be a central element of the view with limited options for screening or mitigation planting. Since this will also mark the entrance to the Site, the visual connection between the buildings and SPSC development will be obvious to the viewer. For mid or long-distance views, the filtering function of vegetation and landform would reduce visual effects to a moderate or low-moderate degree⁵. The effects from the eastern (Lake Hood) side would be low due to the difference in elevation relating to the terrace that the Site is located on. While the proposal would be intermittently visible from some long-distance viewpoints along roads, these would be largely curtailed by shelterbelts.

⁵ According to NZILA guidance low-moderate effects translate to "minor"

Effects on private residences would be limited with partial views from the Village Green development in the north and Lake Hood settlement to the east. Since the Sprung Facilities are at some distance (over 0.5km) to these private viewpoints and the town houses are visually less prominent the effects from private residences would be low-moderate.

Landscape Character and Rural Amenity Effects Assessment

The proposal is located on a part of the Ashburton Plains that has experienced a change from a rural character to a more settled character. The existing settlement at Lake Hood provides for a range of residential development that extends around the northern and north-eastern lake shore. More recent rural lifestyle/ residential development has taken place south of Lake Hood Drive, along Stranges Road. Clustered residential development (referred to Village Green) is currently in the stages of implementation on the northern side of Huntingdon Avenue.

While the Ashburton Plains are generally dominated by large-scale intensive farming, the node of residential development around Lake Hood has led to rural residential amenity outcomes otherwise associated with rural lifestyle developments. This change to the rural character also includes removal of some shelterbelts and implementation of amenity planting. This parkland amenity associated with deciduous avenue plantings along the lake edge and Huntingdon Avenue will be reflected in the proposed design for the Southern Parallel Campus. The presence of larger buildings (such as the storage sheds north of Huntington Ave) is not entirely unexpected in this particular part of the rural environment.

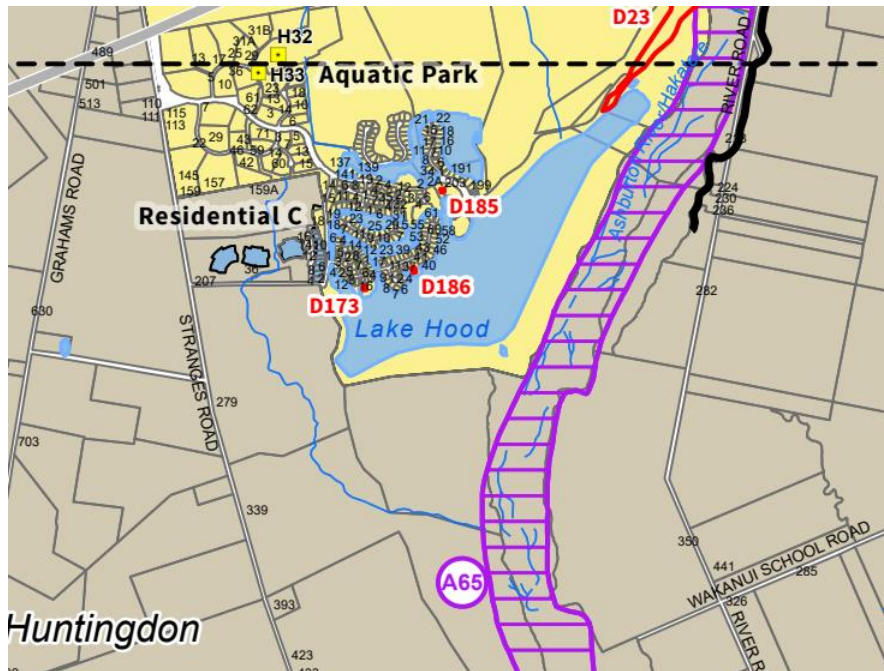
The existing rural character would undergo a substantial change through the introduction of a number of buildings onto the Site. The two large-scale sport facilities that will be located in the central part of the Site will differ in both scale and design from farm-related buildings commonly found within the rural landscape. The remainder of the smaller buildings, such as the residential units, stables, café and motel will be kept similar in appearance to each other to avoid visual clutter on site. The two main design components will be clearly legible with a comprehensive design in terms of material and colours for all secondary buildings (off-form concrete and stone). This will help to unify the appearance of buildings and provide an attractive design within the campus and in views that can be gained from viewpoints outside the Site.

The landscape design will complement the location of buildings and will ensure that visual effects of bulky built form are minimised. The use of species such as oak, poplar, liquidambar, kowhai, olive and tī kōuka/ cabbage trees that will grow approximately between 10m and 35m in height will provide clusters of vertical elements throughout the largely open Site that will help to visually integrate the 17m high sports facility buildings. While the buildings, including the sports facilities and 5.8m high townhouses will be visible from a range of nearby and mid-distance viewpoints as outlined in the visual effects assessment in detail, the proposed planting will assist to visually integrate the buildings into the flat landscape. The clusters of exotic amenity trees and native shrubs will allow for viewshafts into the Site to maintain a sense of spaciousness while providing partial screening of the built form. Through the strategic use of naturally shaped bunding the visual effects from nearby viewpoints can be minimised without compromising the visual permeability of the Site. The central ephemeral waterway that traverses the Site from north to south will be enhanced through native planting and will serve as an ecological corridor through the Site.

Overall, the effects on the rural character of the Site would be moderate to high with a range of different elements leading to a change from a very open setting to a parkland amenity. However, large open spaces will be maintained within the Site where sports fields are located. The proposed buildings will be clustered and the residential development will be contained in the part of the Site that is closest to the existing Lake Hood settlement. The proposed planting will assist with the visual integration of the large-scale buildings on the Site to ensure that a high level of amenity can be achieved. While there will be a change in character on the Site, this would not lead to adverse effects on the overall amenity of the rural environment.

Assessment against Relevant Landscape Provisions

The Site is located within the Rural B Zone (beige in map below). The Lake Hood Settlement is predominantly within the Aquatic Park zoning (yellow), with new clustered development in the Village Green to the north of the Site in Residential C Zone (blue). The Ashburton River (purple hatched) has been identified as an Area of Significant Nature Conservation Value.



Ashburton District Plan map showing zoning around Lake Hood.

The section below contains a brief assessment of the proposal against the relevant provisions in the Ashburton District Plan.

Landscape

The objectives and policies in the Landscape Chapter of the Ashburton District Plan relate to Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes (ONF/Ls). Since the Site is not located within or near an ONF/L these provisions are not relevant to the proposal.

Natural Character

Objective 3.4: Natural Character: Preserve the natural character of the District's coastal environment, rivers, lakes, wetlands and their margins, and protect such areas from inappropriate subdivision, land use and development.

Policy 3.4A Recognise that the following natural patterns, qualities, elements, features and processes contribute to natural character: · areas or water bodies in or close to their natural state; · water flows, levels and quality; · coastal or freshwater processes; · landforms and landscapes; · indigenous biodiversity.

Policy 3.4C Maintain and, where possible, enhance the naturalness, indigenous biodiversity and nature conservation values of lakes, rivers, wetlands and their margins with the restoration of contours and indigenous planting.

Policy 3.4I Require the location, design and use of structures and facilities which: · pass across or through the surface of any water body; or · are attached to the bank of a water body. To be assessed in relation to their effects on natural character.

The site is not within the coastal environment; the Ashburton River is located two kilometres from the Site and will not be affected by the proposal.

The Site includes an ephemeral stream that crosses the property in a central location from north to south. Currently, this stream provides low natural character due to the intensive agricultural use of the immediately adjacent land. The stream and its banks will be enhanced through the proposal with the planting of native species, such as flax and grass species.

Lake Hood is an 85ha large, man-made lake that has been designed as a combined recreational and residential development in line with its purpose as an aquatic park. The lake provides opportunities for recreational activities, such as swimming, kayaking, rowing, water skiing and jet skiing. The rowing lanes are close to the Site and there will be access provided from the campus to the lake. Lake Hood and the surrounding reserve land is used for informal recreation by the community and a walkway provides existing access around the lake. The Site is located adjacent to the western reserve boundary, on an elevated terrace which curtails the visual connection between the western lakeshore and the proposal. While there will be views to some parts of the proposal from various viewpoints around the lake, these will not have an adverse effect on the existing, relatively low perceived natural character of the lake due to the spatial separation.

Rural Character and Amenity

Objective 3.5: Rural Character and Amenity: To protect and maintain the character and amenity values of the District's rural areas, considering its productive uses whilst providing for non-rural activities that meet the needs of local and regional communities and the nation.

Policy 3.5A Maintain clear distinctions between the urban and rural areas and avoid the dispersal of residential activities throughout the rural areas that anticipate a higher standard of amenity than rural activities.

Policy 3.5B Provide for the establishment of non-rural activities in the rural areas, whilst managing any potential adverse effects on the character and amenity of the rural environment and rural productive activities.

Policy 3.5D Protect the visual qualities of the surrounding environment from any adverse effects of night lighting of recreational and business activities.

Policy 3.5E Retain an open and spacious character to the rural areas of the District, with a dominance of open space and plantings over buildings by ensuring that the scale and siting of development is such that:

- it will not unreasonably detract from the privacy or outlook of neighbouring properties;*
- sites remain open and with a rural character as viewed from roads and other publicly accessible places;*
- the character and scale of buildings is compatible with existing development within the surrounding rural area;*
- the probability of residential units being exposed to significant adverse effects from an activity on a neighbouring property is reduced.*

Policy 3.5G Ensure that the use of water bodies for motorised craft and/or any other activity avoids any adverse effects on public enjoyment, availability of the water bodies and their margins as well as its natural character.

The location of the proposed Southern Parallel Sports Campus has been chosen to reflect the character of the adjacent Lake Hood Aquatic Park Zone where a wide range of residential and recreational activities can already be found. While the Site itself falls in the Rural B Zone, the expected level of development and visual amenity will be more closely associated with the existing settlement than with the agricultural production landscape of the wider Ashburton Plains. To the north of the Site, rural-residential life-style blocks provide a rural estate character on arrival to the settlement and a transition in density between the surrounding rural landscape and Huntingdon Park.

The proposal will provide an open parkland character with buildings clustered in the central part of the Site to maintain an overall spaciousness experienced from viewpoints outside. Similar to the Village Green development to the north of Huntingdon Avenue, this will also provide a transition from the denser development in the Aquatic Park Zone to the wider rural environment to the south and west. The proposal does not constitute residential sprawl into the rural zone, but consists of a comprehensive development where an appropriate level of amenity is provided within the campus.

While the character and scale of buildings proposed for the covered sport facilities will be different to the existing development within the surrounding rural and residential areas, the proposal reflects the requirements of specific activities that are largely aligned with the recreational uses of Lake Hood Aquatic

Zone. In the vicinity of the proposal large-scale agricultural structures include grain silos and winter feed sheds that are of comparable height and size to some of the components of the proposal.

Since the proposed buildings are all well set back from the property boundaries and no neighbouring buildings are located near the Site, the rural outlook from existing residential properties would not change substantially. There will be no adverse effect on the privacy or outlook of neighbouring properties. The density of residential development proposed in the north-eastern quadrant of the Site will be clustered and set back by 160m from the boundary with the reserve around Lake Hood. The proposed 5.8m height of these buildings allows for single-storey townhouses. The clustering approach will ensure that overall, an appropriate balance of open space to built form can be achieved on the Site, consistent with the existing amenity values provided in the area.

Lake Hood settlement contains residential street lighting along roads and the storage facility to the north of Huntingdon Road includes permanent, bright security lighting. Therefore, the darkness of the night sky, otherwise generally expected in the rural environment, has already been compromised. As part of the proposed activities lighting throughout the Site will only be provided on a permanent basis in the form of low down-lights for pedestrian purposes which will avoid light spill beyond the boundary of the Site. The lighting of sports fields would be intermittent and restricted to events. The proposed lighting masts around the sport field in the north-western quadrant can be retracted to minimise their visual effects while they are not in use.

Conclusion

The SPSC is proposed near Lake Hood settlement, a well-established subdivision approximately 7 kilometres south-west of Ashburton Township. The Site is bound by Stranges Road to the west and Huntingdon Avenue to the north and is adjacent to the public reserve along the western shores of Lake Hood. The Site has a flat topography and is currently used for pastoral farming, similar to the wider landscape context which is characterised by large blocks of open paddocks and intervening established exotic shelter belts.

The proposal consists of a 65-hectare joint venture comprising a sports campus and international standard equestrian and equine centre. The Site is divided into two parts comprising the 35-hectare Southern Parallel Sports Campus to the north and the 30-hectare Southern Parallel Equestrian Centre in the south. The key built components of the Sports Campus include two sport facility buildings with a Sprung design (17 m high, 48 m wide, 100 m long) and a similar structure at the Equestrian Centre, as well as stables; all of them located in the central part of the Site. Three rows of single-storey townhouses will serve as accommodation in the north-eastern part of the Site, with sports fields located in the north-west, polo fields in the south-west and temporary car parking in the south-east.

The visual effects assessment contained in this report outlines the potential visibility of the proposed structures from a variety of viewpoints. The Sprung Structures will lead to the highest visual effects due to their height and bulk. They have, therefore, been located in the central part of the Site to minimise their visibility and to provide a buffer that can accommodate landscaping in relation to any external viewpoints. It is anticipated that moderate to high visual effects would be experienced from short-distance viewpoints to the west, such as Maginness and Stranges Road. However, these viewpoints are not frequently accessed by the public. From viewpoints in the east, including Lake Hood residential and recreation areas, visual effects would be low due to the intervening terrace edge that curtails views from these lower-lying areas. From viewpoints in the north effects would be low from more distant locations, such as the northern part of Stranges Road and low to moderate in closer-up views, such as Huntingdon Ave and the Village Green subdivision. The existing intervening vegetation along the Site boundary and proposed landscape will assist to minimise visual effects from the northern viewpoints which are located at a comparable elevation. In summary, the visual effects from short-distance viewpoints in the immediate vicinity of the Site will be moderate to high where the Sprung Facilities will be a central element of the view with limited options for screening or mitigation planting, such as Stranges Road. Since these facilities will also mark the entrance to the Site, the visual connection between the buildings and SPSC development will be obvious to the viewer in these areas. For mid or long-distance views, the filtering function of vegetation and landform would reduce

visual effects to a moderate or low-moderate degree⁶. The effects from the eastern (Lake Hood) side would be low due to the difference in elevation relating to the terrace that the Site is located on. While glimpses of the proposal would be intermittently visible from some long-distance viewpoints along roads, these would be largely curtailed by shelterbelts.

Effects on private residences would be limited with partial views from the Village Green development in the north and Lake Hood settlement to the east. Since the Sprung Facilities are proposed at some distance (over 0.5km) to these private viewpoints and the town houses are visually less prominent the effects from private residences would be low-moderate.

While the Ashburton Plains are generally dominated by large-scale intensive farming, the node of residential development around Lake Hood has led to rural residential amenity outcomes otherwise associated with rural lifestyle residential developments. The existing rural character on the Site itself would undergo a substantial change through the introduction of a number of buildings onto the Site. The two large-scale sport facilities that will be located in the central part of the Site are akin to large rural and storage sheds, but will differ somewhat in both scale and design from farm-related buildings commonly found within the rural landscape. However, the landscape design will complement the location of buildings and will ensure that visual effects of bulky built form are minimised.

Overall, the effects on the rural character of the Site would be moderate to high with a range of different elements leading to a change from a very open setting to a parkland amenity. However, large open spaces will be maintained within the Site where sports fields are located. The proposed buildings will be clustered and the residential development will be contained in the part of the Site that is closest to the existing Lake Hood settlement which already provides a rural residential character. The proposed planting will assist with the visual integration of the large-scale buildings on the Site to ensure that a high level of amenity can be achieved.

While the visual and rural character effects would be up to moderate to high (more than minor) the subsequent assessment against the relevant Ashburton District Plans provisions, led to the conclusion that the proposal would not be contrary to the objectives and policies that apply. The proposal is not near an Outstanding Natural Landscape or waterway that would require an assessment against RMA S6(a) and (b) matters.

The location of the proposed Southern Parallel Sports Campus has been chosen to reflect the character of the adjacent Lake Hood Aquatic Park Zone where a wide range of residential and recreational activities can already be found. While the Site itself falls in the Rural B Zone, the expected level of development and visual amenity will be more closely associated with the existing settlement than with the agricultural production landscape of the wider Ashburton Plains. To the north of the Site, rural-residential life-style blocks provide a rural estate character on arrival to the settlement and a transition in density between the surrounding rural landscape and Huntingdon Park.

While there will be a change in character on the Site, this would not lead to adverse effects on the overall amenity of the wider rural environment. The proposal will provide an open parkland character with buildings clustered in the central part of the Site to maintain an overall spaciousness experienced from viewpoints outside. Since the proposed buildings are all well set back from the property boundaries and no neighbouring buildings are located near the Site, the rural outlook from existing residential properties would not change substantially.

⁶ According to NZILA guidance low-moderate effects translate to "minor"