

Landscape Assessment Report for The Yards, Fast Track Application

9 June 2022



Document Quality Assurance

Bibliographic reference for citation:

Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects Limited. Landscape Assessment Report for The Yards, Fast Track Application, 7 June 2022

Date: 7 June 2022

Status: For Mediation

Prepared for: Cardrona Cattle Company Limited

Prepared by:



.....
Tony Milne
NZILA Fellow + Registered Landscape Architect

Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects Limited
Level Two
69 Cambridge Terrace
Christchurch 8013
PO Box 3764
Christchurch 8140
Ph: 03 366 3268

Use and Reliance

This report has been prepared by Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects Limited on the specific instructions of our client. It is solely for our client's use for the purpose for which it is intended in accordance with the agreed scope of work. Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects does not accept any liability or responsibility in relation to the use of this report contrary to the above, or to any person other than the Client. Any use or reliance by a third party is at that party's own risk. Where information has been supplied by the Client or obtained from other external sources, it has been assumed that it is accurate, without independent verification, unless otherwise indicated. No liability or responsibility is accepted by Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects Limited for any errors or omissions to the extent that they arise from inaccurate information provided by the Client or any external source.

Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	The Proposal	5
3	Relevant Statutory and Policy Provisions	7
4	Landscape Description	9
5	Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects.....	11
6	Recommended Mitigation	12
7	Conclusion	13

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope

Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects (**RMM**) has been engaged by Cardrona Cattle Company Limited (**CCCL / the Applicant**) to assess the actual and potential landscape and visual effects of a resource consent application for yard-based contracting, service activities and a storage facility at Victoria Flats Gibbston.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology and terminology used in this report has been informed by the Draft Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines and the Queenstown1 Lakes Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) Landscape Assessment Methodology².

This report is tailored to suit the nature of the project and its context including the framework of the governing legislation. In particular, this report has been prepared to support an application to the Minister for the Environment for referral into the covid fast-track process. The site has been visited several times over the past two years. These site visits have been undertaken for a variety of reasons. Specific to this assessment, the site visits have assisted in understanding the landscape character and values within the receiving environment, identifying where development may be located within the site, designing the landscape plan, and assessing the proposal's actual and potential landscape and visual effects.

The statutory documents containing provisions relevant to the proposal are found in the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**) and what is known as the QLDC Proposed District Plan ("**PDP**"). The PDP gives effect to the RMA and higher order planning documents such as the Otago Regional Policy Statement, within the context of the site and provides the policy framework against which this landscape assessment has been evaluated.

1 Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'. [Final Draft subject to final editing, graphic design, illustrations, approved by Tuia Pito Ora/NZILA 5 May 2021].

2 PDP Chapter 3 Strategic Policies 3.3.45, 3.3.46.

2 The Proposal

2.1 Description of the Proposal

CCCL proposes to construct and operate a resource recovery park (including recycling centre, demolition yard, building materials recycling and resales yard), rural type industrial and contracting/service activity yard (such as a contracting yards for processing and storage of landscaping supplies), as well as facilities for more general storage, and other yard-based and related industrial or otherwise compatible activities (e.g. a worm farm and composting activity) and associated subdivision (overall, "**The Yards**").

2.1.1 The yards – yard based contractors' activities

The contractors' yard component will comprise a subdivision and associated road construction to facilitate in the order of 54 lots ranging in size from 0.2ha to 1.5ha. The yards will be utilised for contractors to process and store landscaping materials, store equipment and vehicles such as heavy vehicles and excavation machinery. Each contractor's yard includes provision for a total building coverage up to 600m², and a maximum building height of 8m and a lower height of 6m at the eastern end of the site (as shown by Lots 34 – 54 on the master plan).

2.1.2 Storage units

The Storage units will occupy a relatively small portion of the development site and will be a 7.8ha area comprising a gate house/office 57m² in area, an administration building of 307m², buildings for a maintenance store, shed in the order of 130m², in the order of 176 general purpose storage units of varying sizes occupying an area of 4,240m², the 'garage club' storage units comprising 89 units and occupying an area of 2690m², and adjacent to an existing pond fed by water races 73 Lakeside storage units comprising an area of 4,751m² each with an open yard area.

The roading and allotment and activity layout is depicted in the master plan in **Figure 1** below.



Figure 1: Excerpt of the site plan illustrating the extent of Gibbston Character Zone (red hatching) and Rural Zone (no hatching) and the extent of the National Grid Yard setback (12m from the edge of each line) by blue hatching.

3 Relevant Statutory and Policy Provisions

3.1 The Proposed District Plan

The majority of the site and development area is located within the Gibbston Character Zone (**GCZ**) and the outer portions of the site and development area are within the Rural Zone and Outstanding Natural Landscape overlay which applies to the majority of Rural Zoned land in the District.

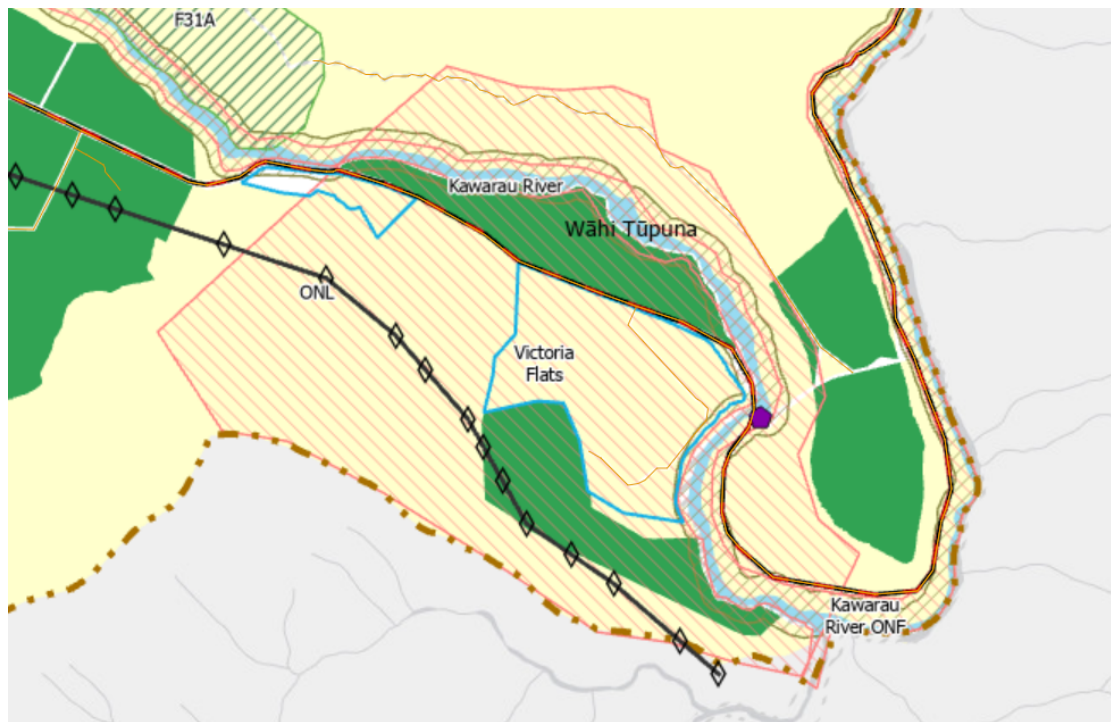


Figure 2: General location of the subject site (red circle) identifying its location within the Rural Zone (Yellow shading), Gibbston Character Zone (green shading) and priority area overlay (red diagonal hatching) and National Grid (black line with diamonds showing the tower location) (Source: QLDC Web Map Application).

3.2 Priority Area and Values Identification Framework

The parts of the site zoned Rural are subject to the Victoria Flats landscape values identification framework priority area, as identified in PDP Strategic Policy 3.3.36. The Victoria Flats priority area is one of 25 priority areas identified throughout the District's Rural Zone's ONFs and ONLs.

The extent of this priority area encapsulates a substantial portion of the eastern extent of the Gibbston area surrounding mountain context.

The Priority Areas will be subject to a plan change/variation by QLDC to include schedules identifying the landscape attributes, landscape values and the related landscape capacity of each of those areas.

Where a resource consent application is made within a priority area prior to the plan change/variation having effect, PDP Strategic Policy 3.3.29 contemplates this by requiring applications to refer to the landscape assessment methodology in Strategic Policy 3.3.45 and by applying best practice landscape assessment methodology.

The PDP values identification framework does not preclude applications for resource consent being made within a Rural Zone priority area, but that the landscape assessment methodology, in the absence of the landscape attribute schedules being added to PDP Chapter 21, are undertaken in accordance with SP 3.3.45 and best practice.

The landscape methodology undertaken is in accordance with best practice and SP 3.3.45.

It should also be noted, however, that only a very small part of the proposal is located in the Rural Zone.

3.3 Resource Consents Required

The proposal requires a resource consent under the PDP for a non-complying activity for yard and service based and industrial type activities. A resource consent for a discretionary activity is required for any buildings within the Rural Zone and Gibbston Character Zone.

3.4 PDP Chapter 3 Strategic Directions

The policy direction in the PDP Strategic Chapters are that landscape values within the Rural Zone ONL/ONF are protected (i.e. Strategic Policies 3.3.30 and 3.3.31). It is understood that the Gibbston Character Zone is identified in the PDP as an 'exception zone' and the ONL policies do not apply.

Subdivision and development in the Gibbston Character Zone is to be provided for to the extent anticipated by that exception zone, and on the basis that any additional subdivision and development not provided for would protect the landscape values of the surrounding ONL (Strategic Policy 3.2.5.4).

3.5 PDP Chapter 6 Landscapes and Rural Character

The policies of PDP Chapter 6 which are applicable to the Rural Zone ONL and Gibbston Character Zone and relevant to this proposal seek to avoid development to urban densities in the rural environment (Policy 6.3.2.1), and to enable the continuation of the contribution (if any) that viticulture makes to landscape character (Policy 6.3.2.4).

For the limited Rural Zone components, the policy direction is that development and buildings will be reasonably difficult to see from beyond the boundary of the site (Policy 6.3.3.1(b)).

3.6 Chapter 21 Rural Zone and Chapter 23 Gibbston Character Zone.

Chapters 21 and 23 both contain a series of landscape assessment matters that service the purpose of assisting to implement the relevant policies. The landscape assessment matters have been taken into account as part of the assessment.

4 Landscape Description

4.1 Landscape Values of the Receiving Environment

The following provides a summary of the key landscape and amenity values identified relative to the receiving environment.

- Victoria Flats is surrounded by mountains which contribute to a high level of natural character. Landscape values are associated with the legibility of the landform and amenity values include the scenic quality of the setting and sense of enclosure.
- The influence of the Kawarau River ONF on the river terrace is limited as it has an incised path well below the river terrace. It is a notable feature from Victoria Bridge and the highway corridor along the curve of the oxbow.
- On the flats, which includes the site, land cover is primarily pasture and low hardy thickets of sweet briar rose. Although exotic, the naturalised patterns of vegetation contribute to a perceived sense of naturalness.
- The river terrace of the flats itself has a rural character with a dominance of open space and low density of built form.
- A variety of land uses including productive (stock grazing), semi-industrial (QLD landfill, a quarry and asphalt plant on the northern side of SH6 opposite Victoria Flats Road) and recreation activities (Wakatipu Gun Club, Oxbow Adventures and Off-Road Adventures 4WD tracks) exist across Victoria Flats.
- In proximity to the QLD landfill, amenity values are reduced by odour and dust.
- Exotic shelterbelts, bunds and mitigation planting are typical elements of development across the flats. These are a human intervention which detract from the openness and naturalness of the river terrace.
- The Gibbston Character Zone which comprises most of the development generally anticipates viticulture use, however this has never eventuated and so there is no viticulture at Victoria Flats. As such, the existing character of Victoria Flats is distinct from the character of Gibbston Valley to the west.

The wider landscape character of Gibbston Valley comprises a mix of viticulture, arcadian pastoral, natural features, rural living at varying scales, visitor attractions, historical elements, and infrastructure. The amenity of the Gibbston Valley landscape is largely associated with the juxtaposition of viticulture and intensive pastoral uses on the valley floor in the context of the surrounding more natural hills and mountain slopes.

Victoria Flats has a different character to that of the wider Gibbston Valley. This can largely be attributed to the localized topography and physical separation of Victoria Flats from the central and eastern parts of the Gibbston Valley.

Furthermore, the evolving patterns of land use which have occurred across Victoria Flats since implementation of the QLD landfill, has had an influence on prospects for intensive viticultural activity. The landfill would not coexist with the landscape character of the GCZ as described above and thus makes the site unsuitable for advancement of viticultural tourism, hospitality and visitor accommodation type activities associated with viticulture. As a result, the existing character of the

site and Victoria Flats is that of a more typical pastoral rural landscape, although with industrial and commercial recreation activities.

4.2 Landscape character and values of the application site

For the above reasons, the following list of elements and features contribute to the existing landscape character and values of the application site:

- The site itself is relatively flat and open, exhibiting a working rural character, attributes contributing to this include modified vegetation cover, dominance of open space over built form and productive land use.
- Significant human modifications are prevalent as a result of farming practices and associated infrastructure. This contributes to the rural character of the site and reduced natural character.
- Ecological integrity of the application site is generally poor, due to lack of native vegetation and prevalence of exotic species.
- Amenity values afforded by the application site are broadly derived from the qualities of the mountainous landscape which surrounds Victoria Flats, which contribute a sense of ruggedness and scenic quality.
- Amenity is also influenced by the adjacent land uses, including the landfill and rock excavation operation. Amenity values are reduced by the proximity of the landfill. From the southern part of the site, dust and the tops of refuse piles are partly visible. From the north site, shelterbelts adjacent to Victoria Flats Road reduce the sense of openness otherwise experienced across Victoria Flats. To the north of the site is a quarry with asphalt plant.
- Within the south site there is a sense of 'remoteness', although it is not actually physically remote as it is accessed to State Highway 6, a key transportation corridor for the region. A sense of 'remoteness' is attributed to the localised basin landscape which encloses the south site. As a result, visual influence of the south site, especially the west half, is highly limited.

5 Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

5.1 Landscape Effects on the Receiving Environment

The localised topography of the site contributes to a sense of remoteness and containment, which presents an opportunity for the site to successfully absorb the scale and form of development in the proposal. Further, in proximity to the landfill and other semi-industrial land uses within Victoria Flats, the proposed activity will be able to coexist and is not entirely unexpected.

The proposal seeks to retain the values of the ONL associated with the broader landscape while acknowledging that some areas of the site within the ONL overlay may be suitable for development due to the degree of modification and values of the site which clearly differ from the values associated with the surrounding landforms.

Visibility of the development generally from SH6 will be limited and for a relatively short duration, in particular the views of the storage units (i.e. westbound traffic approximately 500m south of the Victoria Falls Bridge) will be completely screened by a hill in the foreground, and the raised topography of the west terrace edge located across the Kawarau River (adjacent to the site). Views of the development from SH6 opposite the entrance via Victoria Flats Road will not be possible owing to the substantial setback of the development from SH6.

Importantly, for the small parts of the development within the Rural Zone, buildings associated with development will be able to be located, designed and mitigated with mounding and plantings so they will be reasonably difficult to see from public places and particularly from SH6. Views from elevated locations such as the Mt Rosa walking track into the site will be possible, however there is a considerable distance from these locations and the site, and views are in the context of the wider Victoria Flats.

Therefore, regarding visual outcomes from State Highway 6, the key consideration is that future development will not compromise the underlying landscape values of the ONL nor the visual amenity and landscape character of the rural landscape as experienced from State Highway 6.

Future development will generally be located in the less visible areas of the site. This approach, paired with the proposed recommendations and mitigation below, will contribute to reducing the visibility of the future development within the proposed zone.

6 Recommended Mitigation

The proposed recommendations and mitigation below, will contribute to reducing the visibility of the future development within the proposed zone.

- Limiting the building bulk and location along the eastern extent of the site (as shown below), and/or mounding and tree and shrub planting on the eastern boundary of the site as shown below to comprehensively screen development as viewed from SH6 and accord with PDP Policy 6.3.3.1(B), to ensure development is reasonably difficult to see.
- A minimum 5m deep strip of planting of trees and shrubs within the road setback of each lot.
- Riparian planting to a minimum of 3m width to either side of the water race. Amenity planting around the pond.

Future development Within the Yards:

- Building coverage limited 600m² on each site
- The careful siting of buildings and limiting the maximum height of 6m at the eastern end of the site (Lots 34 – 54).
- 10m building setback from the internal road boundary
- Building colours to be not greater than 20% reflectivity

Proposed Storage Units:

- Maximum height of two storey buildings 7.3m and single storey buildings (i.e. storage units 5m)
- Building colours to be not greater than 20% reflectivity

7 Conclusion

The proposed development will introduce a new low intensity industrial land use, service activity and storage unit development to the site. While of low intensity, it will have a higher density of built form than what currently exists across Victoria Flats.

Accordingly, the changes to the landscape will introduce new elements that will reduce the existing natural character and openness of the wider environment; however, the development is for the most part visually contained to the site and will not contribute to any more than generally low-moderate adverse effects on visual amenity, providing the visibility of development, in particular buildings from SH6 is effectively managed.

Visibility of the development from SH6 can be appropriately mitigated, particularly in time, by mounding and vegetation coupled with a 6m maximum building height for the eastern end of the site (Lots 34 – 54 as shown on the master plan).

Further, it is considered that this activity is not out of keeping with other semi-industrial activities across Victoria Flats which are more suited to rural areas than the urban environment, such as the landfill, quarry, and asphalt plant.

In this context, and having regard to the values identified above, overall, adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity values will be no more than low – moderate which comparatively equates to no more than minor.



Figure 2. Orange shading identifying the area which will be subject to additional visual mitigation measures to ensure buildings and development are reasonably difficult to see from SH6.