

Whisper Creek Plan Change

LMM INVESTMENTS LIMITED

Landscape Visual Impact Assessment

Project No. 2024_211 | D

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Author: Nika Kent – Landscape Architect/ Chris Greenshields – Principal Landscape Architect (NZILA registered)
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DCM URBAN DESIGN LIMITED

10/245 St Asaph St, Ōtautahi / Christchurch 8011
Level 1, 17 Garrett St, Te Whanganui-a-Tara / Wellington 6011
Level 4, 1 Bond St, Ōtepoti / Dunedin 9016

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction	4
2. The Proposal	5
3. Receiving Environment	7
4. Assessment of Effects	10
5. Conclusion	23

APPENDIX 1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

APPENDIX 2: Whisper Creek Plan Change- Appendix 2- Graphic Attachment – Urban Design and Landscape

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose and Scope

DCM Urban Design has been commissioned by LMM Investments Limited (the applicant) to assess the potential landscape and visual effects of a proposed plan change to enable a residential subdivision, at a site comprised of multiple properties, generally located at 240 Spencerville Road, Ouruhia, Christchurch. The site is located approximately 11km from central Christchurch and 500m from Spencerville, with the Styx River directly adjoining the southern/ southeastern boundary of the site.

It is proposed that the large majority of the site is rezoned from its current Specific Purpose (Golf Resort) and Rural Urban Fringe zoning to Residential New Neighbourhood zoning, with the section of the site along the Styx River retaining its Open Space Water and Margins zoning as at present. The proposed rezoning of the site will permit development of the site as per the provided indicative scheme plan, which shows how the site could potentially hold a mix of various residential lots/densities, a small commercial area, stormwater network, and an extensive area of open green space and wetlands in future.

The development site is not located within any landscape character (including outstanding natural features and landscapes), cultural, or historic overlays. Thereby the landscape matters of Section 6 of the Resource Management Act (RMA) are largely inapplicable to the proposal.¹

We have conducted site visits and worked closely with the applicant and other consultants to develop mitigation measures to avoid, remedy, or mitigate potential adverse effects on Landscape Character, Landscape Values, and Visual Amenity. These are discussed in the recommendations section (Section 2.2) below.

This report is supported by Appendix 1 outlining the broader methodology, and Appendix 2, a set of supporting figures, including site plans, character photos and viewpoint images.

1.2. Methodology

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been informed by *Te Tangi a Te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines* (Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022). The Christchurch District Plan gives effect to the RMA within the context of the site and provides the policy framework against which this landscape assessment has been evaluated.

The broader methodology is outlined in Appendix 1, with the process followed for this proposal including the following:

- **Desktop Research and Site Visits:** A combination of desktop research and site visits were conducted to gather baseline data on the landscape's physical, perceptual and associative values. This provided a comprehensive understanding of the landscape character and visual context of the receiving environment. Photos were taken from the viewpoint locations (outlined within Appendix 2) while visiting the site and surroundings.

¹ The Styx River itself is identified in the Christchurch District Plan as a 'Site of Ecological Significance', 'Ngai Tahu Cultural Significance' and a 'Significant Feature', rezoning of the river corridor is not proposed.

- **Landscape Character and Visual Context Analysis and Assessment:** The site's landscape character and values, including potential visual impacts were analysed, and the visual context of the receiving environment was established to be a 2000m offset from the approximate centre of the proposal site. This distance was determined by the scale of the proposal and the flat topography of the receiving environment, additionally, from greater than 2000m away views to the site are invariably blocked by vegetation and buildings. The landscape character and visual context analysis focused on assessing the *nature and degree of effects on landscape values*, which is consistent with NZILA guidelines. While the offset was established to be 2000m, viewpoints were not necessarily required from this distance as receivers within closer proximity to the proposal are likely to have greater effects than those further away, therefore only the most affected viewers were assessed. The impact evaluation involves explaining the nature of the effect, then assessing the magnitude of that effect, with reasons. The seven-point landscape and visual effects rating scale was used to describe the magnitude of the effects, with both pre-and post-mitigation effects considered. This evaluation encompassed landscape character, values, and visual amenity to provide a holistic assessment of the proposal.
- **Recommendations / Mitigation Measures:** Identification of potential mitigation measures was undertaken to address adverse effects associated with the proposed plan change and future development, which is consistent with best practice guidance. These are discussed in Section 2.2.

The proposal was assessed against the relevant objectives and policies within the Christchurch District Plan relating to landscape values and visual amenity. Specific objectives and policies have been referenced to align with the NZILA guidelines and provide a clear basis for determining any relevant landscape effects.

For further details on assessment methodology and specific terminology used, please refer to Appendix 1.

2 . THE PROPOSAL

2.1 Description of the Proposal

As noted above, the proposal site is located in the northern outskirts of Christchurch and covers an area of approximately 170.62ha. The site is currently predominantly zoned as Specific Purpose (Golf Resort) (SP) with the northwestern corner of the site falling within the Rural Urban Fringe (RuUF) zone. A lesser portion of the site, along the Styx River, is zoned under the Open Space Water and Margins zone (refer to page 3 of Appendix 2 for the Christchurch District Plan zoning map). The existing zoning is subject to an Outline Development Plan (ODP) (refer to page 5 of Appendix 2), which identifies a substantial flood prone area in the southern and eastern section of the site. Under the ODP this area is outlined as a golf course/ open space area. The proposed plan change seeks to rezone the portions of the site within the SP and RuUF zones to Residential New Neighbourhood (RNN) zoning, retaining the Open Space Water and Margins zone along the Styx River as at present.

Consideration of the underlying zoning is an important aspect of this proposal, in determining the permitted baseline for development, which differs from the current use of the site. It is also important to note that the current SP zoning was established approximately 15 years ago, prior to the Christchurch earthquakes, with

no identifiable demand/ commercial interest in developing the site into a golf resort and training facility existing now.

An indicative scheme plan for the site has been provided (refer to page 15 of appendix 2), this showing how the site could potentially be developed with the zone change to RNN zoning. The indicative scheme plan shows larger lots along the site's western fringes, while also holding potential for pockets of medium density housing. A small commercial area is also proposed, while a large section of the site (including the Lower Styx flood area) will remain undeveloped, consisting of green open space, wetlands and stormwater basins. Development of the site as per the indicative scheme plan also looks to include the potential for ecological restoration of the length of the Styx River which adjoins the site. A network of public walking and cycling tracks are proposed to be implemented throughout the site's green spaces and stormwater management areas, and along the margins of the Styx River. It is also intended that improved walking and cycling paths and links will be created from the site and within existing road reserves, to connect future residential development to nearby schools and other urban areas.

Although the scheme plan is indicative only, and likely to change to some degree with progression of the project into greater detail, the broader layout of the site and mitigation strategies (outlined in section 2.2 below) are expected to be retained. This allowing conceptualization of the proposed plan change in order to assess the potential landscape and visual effects.

2.2 Recommended Mitigation Measures

1. MM1: A 5m wide native landscape strip is proposed along the boundaries of the site which adjoin to Teapes, Turners and Spencerville Roads, with retention of existing established planting where possible. The location of planting is shown in the Outline Development Plan shown on page 8 of Appendix 2, as incorporated into the 'Proposed Rural Interface' with greater detail of this boundary treatment shown on page 13. The proposed landscape strip will screen future residential development from these roads, while also providing an ecological corridor along these extents of the site.
2. MM2: A 10m building setback from Teapes, Turners Road and Spencerville Road is proposed, to offset built from these road frontages. When combined with MM1 above, this will help screen future residential dwellings and prevent encroachment of domestic activity into the public realm, while also reducing the likelihood of reverse sensitivity effects. Refer to page 8 of Appendix 2 for the location of the built form setback under the 'Proposed Rural Interface', and page 13 for a visual reference.
3. MM3: The implementation of boundary treatments that reflect a rural character along the external boundaries of the site (where needed) is recommended, including post and rail fencing and post and wire fencing. This will avoid a typical urban appearance and maintain a sense of permeability between the site and its surroundings. Refer to page 8 of Appendix 2 for the proposed fencing locations as part of the 'Proposed Rural Interface', and page 13 for a visualisation.
4. MM4: It is proposed that no private vehicle crossings are constructed from Teapes, Turners and Spencerville Road to future residential lots. Rather it is recommended that vehicle crossings are internalised, with access provided from the site's future internal road network instead. This will allow for

continuity of planting and green views along these roads, and from external viewpoints in this vicinity, when looking towards the development.²

5. MM5: The development of an extensive area of open green space and wetlands in the Lower Styx flood area is supported from a landscape perspective. This will provide a substantial opportunity for enhancement of the site's ecological, recreational and amenity values, particularly with the provision of public access through integration of a pedestrian/cycle network. This aspect of the proposal and indicative scheme plan will additionally aid in the mitigation of adverse visual effects, through distancing future residential development from Lower Styx Road, with views in the foreground and midground consisting of pleasant outlooks towards a sizable green space instead.
6. MM6: The potential for ecological restoration of the margins of the Styx River along the southern/southeastern site boundaries, as part of future development under the proposed plan change, is also supported from a landscape perspective. Land adjacent to the river will facilitate opportunities for riparian restoration and integration of a cycle/ pedestrian trail which will improve public access and recreational value along the Styx River. This will require time and input from the relevant specialists to obtain the full benefit, and is expected to considerably enhance the site's visual and landscape qualities..

3 . R E C E I V I N G E N V I R O N M E N T

3.1 Landscape Description and Characterisation

In a wider scale context, the site is positioned within the semi-rural periphery of Christchurch, with Christchurch city to the south, State Highway 74 to the west, the Pegasus Bay coastline to the east, and the Waimakariri River to the north. Points of interest in the site's vicinity include Spencer Beach Holiday Park, Bottle Lake Forest Park, Brooklands Lagoon, and Spencer Park Beach, amongst others. As noted, the Styx River flows along the southern/southeastern boundary of the proposal site, forming a recognizable landscape feature. Refer to page 2 of Appendix 2 for a location plan of the proposal site.

The topography of the area is generally flat, with open space and landscape planting generally predominating over built form. Where built form is present it is most commonly in the form of spaced out semi-rural residential dwellings with associated garaging, sheds and other agricultural ancillary buildings. The bulk and location of buildings and structures are varied, with no common styles or materiality identified. Notable areas of higher urban density near the site include Spencerville, the cluster of dwellings along Kainga Road, and the neighbourhood of Prestons (located approximately 2km to the south) which forms Christchurch's northern urban boundary.

Vegetation in the area is predominantly exotic in the form of pasture grasses, shelterbelts, boundary plantings, orchards and forestry blocks. Additionally, a reasonable length of the Styx River in this area has its banks occupied by the grassed road verges of local roads and established Willows. Some smaller pockets of restorative native planting are present in the area, for example Te Waoku Kahikatea Reserve, Janet Stewart Reserve and Kaputahi Confluence Conservation Park.

² MM1-MM4 are expected to be implemented via covenants on the titles imposed via the subdivision process and will be required to be in general accordance with the ODP which shows interface treatments.

Agriculture based productive land use at various scales occupies most of the site's surrounds, as evident through the many open fields. Forestry and logging operations are also prevalent, with plantations such as Bottle Lake Forest and Chaney's Forest forming pronounced local landscape features. Christchurch residents often visit the area for outdoor recreation, with dedicated walking, mountain biking and horse-riding tracks present in Bottle Lake Forest, and further walking tracks around Brooklands Lagoon and the Styx River (Styx Source to Sea walkway). Everglades Country Golf Club and Waitikiri Golf Club are also located in the vicinity. An eclectic mix of small businesses are sparsely scattered throughout the area, including services such as dog kennels, brick/ block laying, tree care and others. Semi-rural residential living is also commonplace as mentioned, in the form of larger allotments, lifestyle blocks and smaller urban areas such as Spencerville.

Views readily change as you move through the landscape, being more enclosed in some locations where roadsides are bordered by shelterbelts and tall established planting, while in other areas wider views across the flat terrain and open fields are available. Generally, the area reflects a more quiet rural/ pastoral environment, with a background of farming operations and distant traffic sounds, in contrast to the established urban areas of Christchurch.

Overall, the natural character of the landscape is considered to be modified, with a semi-rural character as opposed to a natural character.

3.2 Site Description

The proposal site itself is relatively flat but does have a noticeable upper terrace (the four 4ha RuFZ lifestyle blocks in the northwestern corner and the wider area proposed for housing development), and lower terrace (to be retained as open space). As detailed in the geotechnical report, the upper terrace is made up of historic sand dunes, whereas the lower terrace which is flood prone, consists of alluvial deposits and silts. There is a level change of approximately 2m between the upper and lower terraces.

Key roads surrounding the site are Spencerville Road, Lower Styx Road and Turners Road. Spencerville Road and Lower Styx Road are both collector roads, while Turners Road is considered a local road. As noted, the Styx River flows along the southern and southeastern aspect of the site, clearly delineating this section of the proposal site's boundary. Planting on the proposal site's side of the Styx River consists largely of a dense screen of Willows.

The overall proposal site consists of the combined area of several existing properties. This includes:

240 Spencerville Road

This property makes up the largest portion of the proposal site at 63.79ha and consists predominantly of open fields stretching between Spencerville Road to the north and the Styx River and Lower Styx Road to the south. The site has a small forestry block in its northwest corner, and shelterbelts centrally. A cluster of buildings are found along its northern boundary, surrounded by established planting, which limits external views from Spencerville Road. Buildings present include two residential dwellings and various farming sheds.

174 Spencerville Road, 220 Spencerville Road, 176 Turners Road, and 156 Turners Road

These four properties are in the northwestern corner of the overall site and are each 4-5ha in size. Each property contains a main residential dwelling in addition to various other ancillary buildings. Boundary plantings are a common feature across these lots, otherwise landscape coverage and the layout of established planting is reasonably varied within each property.

144 Turners Road

144 Turners Road makes up the second largest segment of the overall proposal site, with an area of 47.32ha. This property lies between Turners Road and Lower Styx Road and consists largely of open fields with a few shelterbelts and sporadic trees. This property does not hold a residential dwelling but does contain several farm sheds grouped together, accessed from Turners Road.

165 Turners Road

165 Turners Road forms the southernmost part of the overall proposal site, contributing an area of 40.43ha. This property consists mostly of open fields, with a large extent of this lot bordered by the Styx River to the south. The river forms a distinctive bend in this location, rounding the property's southern boundary. A cluster of buildings are found on this property, around its access point from Teapes Road. This includes two residential dwellings and various farm sheds.

Overall, the proposal site has a largely open nature with grass pasture occupying most of the available land. Some views across the site are enclosed or disrupted, however, by mature boundary plantings, shelterbelts, and the belt of Willows along the Styx River. The combined site features a low level of development with various buildings positioned throughout, mostly in the form of residential dwellings and farm sheds in an assortment of scales and groupings. The natural character of the proposal site is considered modified, with a rural and semi-rural 'lifestyle block' character.

3.3 Landscape Values

Landscape values in regard to the relevant zoning, precincts and other statutory provisions will be discussed in Section 4.1 below; however at a wider scale, Christchurch's semi-rural northern periphery derives its physical, perceptual and associative landscape values from:

- Its location outside of Christchurch's urban boundary, but close proximity to the services and facilities of the city
- A low development density and the predominance of open space, with small urban clusters such as Spencerville
- A close association with natural features, including the Styx River, Brooklands Lagoon, the Pegasus Bay coastline and the Waimakariri River
- The overall flat topography allowing for vast views where not interrupted by boundary and shelterbelt plantings
- Productive agricultural land use, forestry operations, a mix of various small businesses and semi-rural living
- Recreational opportunities provided by destinations such as Bottle Lake Forest, golf courses, Spencer Beach and Brooklands Lagoon

At a local level, the site currently contributes to the following landscape values:

Physical

The site's flat topography and predominantly open paddocks contribute to the sense of openness, interrupted only by shelterbelts and boundary planting. Built form and infrastructure across the proposal site is minimal,

and where it is present is either a dwelling or farming related. Vegetation is largely exotic and although the proposal site borders the Styx River, the site boundary is occupied by a band of Willows, with no restorative riparian plantings or enhancements. Physically the site is typical of a modified semi-rural landscape, with the landscape divided into larger farming lots and rural residential lifestyle blocks.

Perceptual

The site's perceptual values relate mainly to visual amenity, which is described in greater detail in Section 4.3 below. As most of the site is unoccupied by development, with greater distancing between built form, structures and activity, generally a quieter and more peaceful environment is created. Grazing stock and farming processes contribute to background noises and smells of a productive working landscape.

Associative

The site's associative values arise predominantly from its longstanding agricultural use, with the landscape utilized to provide opportunities to generate an income, occupation and lifestyle. The site holds a greater sense of space and closer connection to the land and natural processes than nearby urban areas, while semi-rural living generally correlates with a more unhurried pace of life, removed from the business and commotion of city living.

4 . A S S E S S M E N T O F E F F E C T S

4.1 Statutory Provisions

To provide a comprehensive assessment of the possible effects on landscape character and values, the proposed plan change has been assessed within the relevant statutory context below. This centres around the Christchurch District Plan which accounts for and upholds the values of those who reside in the district.

As outlined in earlier sections of this report, currently the proposal site is predominantly zoned as Specific Purpose (Golf Resort) (SP) with the northwestern corner of the site falling within the Rural Urban Fringe (RuUF) zone. A small section of the southern/southeastern site, along the Styx River, is zoned under the Open Space Water and Margins zone. The proposed plan change seeks to rezone the SP and RuUF zones to the Residential New Neighbourhood zone (RNN) zone. The proposal seeks to keep the Open Space Water and Margins zoning as at present.

The indicative scheme plan and mitigation strategies outlined in section 2.2 above have been assessed against the relevant objectives and policies of the Specific Purpose and Residential Chapters of the Christchurch District Plan, relating to landscape character and visual amenity, to assess how the plan change, and subsequent potential development compares. The potential restoration of the Styx River corridor and development of the Lower Styx flood zone into an open green space and wetlands, has also been assessed against the policies and objectives of the Open space Water and Margins zone, to identify how this aspect of the proposed plan change and consequent future development fits within the district plan.

Christchurch District Plan

Chapter 13 Specific Purpose Zones

13.9.2 Objectives and Policies

13.9.2.1 Objective - Golf resort development

- a. *For the Clearwater Golf Resort and Whisper Creek Golf Resort, to provide golfing and associated facilities (including resort facilities) of international standard, bringing economic and social benefits to the City and region, and to provide other recreational opportunities, and limited residential development, within extensive open space and lake or riparian settings, with no significant adverse effects on the natural or adjoining rural environments.*

Response: As noted, the larger part of the site is currently zoned under the SP (Golf Resort) zone, with the proposal centering around rezoning this area to the RNN zone. Although the proposal is seeking to move away from the SP zoning, it should be noted that many of the key landscape outcomes sought by the objectives and policies of the SP (Golf Resort) zone will nonetheless be achieved under the newly proposed RNN zoning and ODP. This includes objective 13.9.2.1 above.

Although the RNN zoning will not provide golfing and resort facilities, residential, small-scale commercial and green space development under the proposed plan change will still bring economic, social and recreational benefits to the Christchurch region. Although a greater intensity of residential development will take place in part of the site under RNN zoning when compared to SP zoning, an extensive open green space will be retained. This green space, consisting of native plantings and wetlands, is considered a positive gain regarding the natural environment, with the riparian restoration of the Styx River boundary further enhancing natural connections. Adverse effects on adjoining rural environments under the proposed plan change will be mitigated by MM1-MM4, as discussed above in section 2.2, to maintain a pleasant interface between future residential development and rural land.

13.9.2.1.3 Policy - Visual integration and mitigation of effects

- a. *Ensure that built development is well integrated visually into the open rural environments within which each golf resort sits, and that there is adequate separation distance from activities in adjacent zones so as to mitigate potentially adverse effects of the resorts such as noise and traffic.*

Response: Built form under the proposed RNN zoning (as per the indicative scheme plan) will likely consist of residential housing and a small commercial centre, differing from the clubhouse, hotel buildings, and student dormitories, anticipated as part of a golf resort. The forms of residential and small-scale commercial buildings tend to be smaller in size and are therefore easier to visually assimilate through designed measures. The mitigation measures outlined (particularly MM1- MM4), are expected to successfully visually integrate the expected residential and small-scale commercial development under the proposed plan change. This ensures that pleasant outlooks from surrounding open rural environments will be maintained, featuring boundary treatments which are commonly found in the receiving landscape.

13.9.2.1.4 Policy - Careful siting

- a. *Ensure that earthworks and buildings in the two golf resorts are carefully designed, located and constructed,*

for the Whisper Creek Golf Resort so as to be resilient to potential liquefaction and to maintain flood storage capacity in the Lower Styx Ponding Area, and for both resorts, to reduce potential flood damage to buildings in a major flood event.

Response: Although built form will look different under RNN zoning when compared to SP zoning, as in alignment with the policy above, the location of future built form under the plan change will still be carefully sited, in order support resilience in the face of potential liquefaction and flooding hazards. Regarding the site layout, this includes limiting buildings to the higher elevations of the site, while keeping the Lower Styx flood area as open green space.

Chapter 14 Residential

14.2.4 Objective - High quality residential environments

Proposed new 14.2.5

- a. *High quality, sustainable, residential neighbourhoods which are well designed, have a high level of amenity, enhance local character and reflect the Ngāi Tahu heritage of Ōtautahi.*

Response: The proposed plan change is well supported by the above objective, as the plan change to RNN zoning will enable development of a high-quality residential neighbourhood. Future residential development, in keeping with the indicative scheme plan and mitigation measures outlined, is expected to have a high level of amenity, particularly through its association with a substantial green space and the provision of a comprehensive network of footpath and cycling paths. Furthermore, development under the plan change will enable restoration of the Styx River margins along the site boundary, enhancing this natural feature which forms an important local landmark and contributes prominently to local character.

14.2.4.1 Policy - Neighbourhood character, amenity and safety

Proposed new 14.2.5.1

- a. *Facilitate the contribution of individual developments to high quality residential environments in all residential areas (as characterised in Table 14.2.1.1a), through design:*
- i. reflecting the context, character, and scale of building anticipated in the neighbourhood;*
 - ii. contributing to a high quality street scene;*
 - iii. providing a high level of on-site amenity;*
 - iv. minimising noise effects from traffic, railway activity, and other sources where necessary to protect residential amenity;*
 - v. providing safe, efficient, and easily accessible movement for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles; and*
 - vi. incorporating principles of crime prevention through environmental design.*

Response: The proposed plan change to RNN zoning, along with the proposed mitigation measures, is expected to contribute to an overall high quality residential environment from a landscape perspective. The indicative scheme plan outlines the possible future site layout, which is expected to hold a high level of on-site amenity through its association with the substantial green space area and the Styx River. The landscape planting strip proposed (MM1) and 10m building offset (MM2) from Spencerville, Teapes and Turners Roads will help to limit adverse reverse sensitivity effects from these roads, while also providing privacy for future residents, thereby protecting residential amenity in this part of the site. Although the movement routes for vehicle, pedestrian and bike traffic cannot be

confirmed at this stage, under the proposed plan change and as per the indicative scheme plan, it is expected that these will be appropriately designed by the relevant specialists and as approved through the council's engineering approval process. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles will also be able to be better considered as the design progresses into greater detail.

14.2.5 Objective - Residential New Neighbourhood Zone

Proposed new 14.2.8 Objective - Future Urban Zone

- a. *Co-ordinated, sustainable and efficient use and development is enabled in the Residential New Neighbourhood Zone.*

Response: If rezoned to the RNN zone as proposed, it is expected that the site will be efficiently used to maximize its landscape and amenity values under this zone and within its wider context. Where the site is subject to the Lower Styx flood area, and so unsuitable for development, an extensive green space and wetland area will be created. This is expected to accomplish positive outcomes in regard to indigenous biodiversity, habitat creation and recreation. This area is also able to be coordinated with other nearby green spaces, to become part of a wider ecological and recreational network. Where land can be developed in the northern part of the site, a mix of lot sizes and housing densities are proposed (as per the indicative scheme plan), as well as a small commercial centre. This promotes an efficient use of land, with a good mix of activities and housing typologies across the site, as appropriate to the site's constraints (flood area) and the intentions of the RNN zone.

14.2.5.4 Policy - Neighbourhood quality and design

Proposed new 14.2.8.4

- a. *Ensure that use and development:*
 - i. *contributes to a strong sense of place, and a coherent, functional and safe neighbourhood;*
 - ii. *contributes to neighbourhoods that comprise a diversity of housing types;*
 - iii. *retains and supports the relationship to, and where possible enhances, recreational, heritage and ecological features and values; and*
 - iv. *achieves a high level of amenity.*

Response: The proposed plan change to RNN zoning will enable development which aligns well with the above policy. The indicative scheme plan and mitigation measures recommended provide further detail of what this could look like. Although the functionality and safety of the future neighbourhood will be better controlled as the project progresses into detailed design stages, at a high level, a strong sense of place is anticipated due to the site's large green space and close association with the Styx River. The ecological features and values of the site, and the adjoining Styx River will be enhanced, with recreation and active transport networks also well-supported. The indicative scheme plan shows how a diversity of housing types can be provided for under the plan change, while a high level of amenity is expected, particularly through the integration of plantings and natural systems into such a large part of the site.

14.2.5.6 Policy - Integration and connectivity

Proposed new 14.2.8.6

- a. *Ensure effective integration within and between developments and existing areas, including in relation to public open space networks, infrastructure and movement networks.*
- b. *Ensure that the boundaries between new and existing developments are, where appropriate, managed to avoid or mitigate adverse effects.*
- c. *Avoid significant adverse effects and remedy or mitigate other adverse effects on existing businesses, rural activities or infrastructure.*

Response: The proposed plan change to RNN zoning aligns well with the above policy, with the indicative scheme plan showing how development of the site under RNN zoning can be effectively integrated into the existing landscape. The indicative scheme plan outlines the extensive open space network and ecological area that will be provided, connected to the Styx River, and with further connections to the wider landscape. This open green space and restored river margin can form part of a wider network of ecological nodes and corridors in the landscape, while also expanding public accessibility to restored natural spaces. The site boundary along Turners, Teapes and Spencerville Road can be managed to mitigate adverse effects, with a planned landscape buffer (MM1), 10m built form setback (MM2) and boundary treatments reflective of a rural aesthetic (MM3). In combination these are expected to retain pleasant outlooks from these roads and nearby properties (as discussed in greater detail in section 4.3 below), while also delineating a clear boundary and creating a buffer between future urban and existing rural land use.

Chapter 18 open Space

18.2.1 Objectives

18.2.1.1 Objective - Provision of open spaces and recreation facilities

- a. *A network of open spaces and recreation facilities that:*
 - i. *provides a diversity in the type and size of open spaces and recreation facilities to meet the current and future recreation, cultural, health and wellbeing needs of the community;*
 - ii. *contributes to the earthquake recovery of Christchurch and revitalised communities where people enjoy a high quality urban environment and enhanced opportunities for recreation;*
 - iii. *is accessible and distributed to meet the demands generated by population growth, urban intensification and areas of identified deficiency;*
 - iv. *provides users with a pleasant and safe environment;*
 - v. *enables temporary and multifunctional uses;*
 - vi. *maintains and enhances amenity values, connectivity and public access, where appropriate;*
 - vii. *recognises and provides for the historic and contemporary relationship of Ngāi Tahu with Christchurch District's land and water resources, and reflects their cultural values;*
 - viii. *recognises and provides for the district's indigenous biodiversity; and*
 - ix. *maintains and enhances public access to and along the coast.*

Response: The proposed zone change to RNN zoning and future development of the site as aligned with the indicative scheme plan, will provide a substantial open space where residential development is not feasible, in the Lower Styx flood area. This space would support the recreational, health and well-being needs of the community,

for both the future residents of the proposed adjoining residential area, and for Christchurch residents who are able to venture slightly north. The area will be able to hold several purposes, including recreation, water management, enhancement of indigenous biodiversity and habitat creation. There is little incentive to develop such a space without the plan change, with the area likely to remain as farmland otherwise. Under the current SP zoning there is the possibility to develop the space into a golf course, however this would restrict public accessibility, reduce multifunctional use and limit provision for indigenous biodiversity values, with a large part of the site expected to be covered in monocultural turf in such a development scenario.

18.2.1.2 Objective - Natural open space, water bodies and their margins

- a. *The inherent qualities of natural open spaces and water bodies are protected, maintained and enhanced, including:*
 - i. *the natural character, biodiversity, mahinga kai values, health and life supporting capacity of water bodies, their margins and the adjacent open spaces; and*
 - ii. *ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity, including habitats of indigenous fauna.*
- b. *Accessibility of natural open spaces and water bodies and their margins is maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced, for the enjoyment of:*
 - i. *their amenity values;*
 - ii. *a range of compatible recreation activities and recreation facilities; and*
 - iii. *cultural and mahinga kai values.*

Response: As outlined above, the proposed plan change and development as per the indicative scheme plan will also provide opportunities to coordinate restoration of the Styx River margin along the site boundary. This would enhance the natural character and biodiversity along this section of the river corridor with possibilities to be integrated into larger restoration projects along the river, and recreational networks such as the Styx Source to Sea walkway. Overall enhancement of the Styx River, along this reasonable length, will improve public accessibility and amenity values associated with the river. The proposed plan change and subsequent development of the site will provide additional justification to action riparian restoration, rather than resigning this section of the river to its current state.

18.2.2 Policies

18.2.2.1 Policy - The role of open space and recreation facilities

- a. *Provide, restore and enhance a network of private and public open spaces and recreation facilities that cater for a range of roles, functions and activities as identified in Table 18.2.2.1 below.*
- b. *Avoid activities that do not have a practical or functional need to be located within open space.*
- c. *Provide for the redevelopment of privately owned open spaces no longer required for recreation activities in accordance with the rules of the zone most compatible with the surrounding environment.*
- d. *Maintain and enhance, where appropriate, public access connections to walking and cycling track networks, and recognise and provide for collaborative projects by multiple parties.*

Response: Matter d. of the above policy is most applicable to the proposed plan change, and subsequent development of the site. It is intended that future development will be well-connected with pedestrian and cycle paths, both within the site and to the wider landscape. The restoration of the Styx River margin, and creation of the large open green space and wetlands in the Lower Styx flood area, additionally provides opportunities for a

collaborative approach between multiple parties such as Christchurch City Council, the developer and community groups engaged in ecological and active transport work.

18.2.2.4 Policy - Water bodies and their margins

- a. *Maintain and enhance the natural character, biodiversity, health and life supporting capacity of water bodies and their margins by:*
 - i. *limiting development and activities in the vicinity of water bodies to those activities which have a practical and functional need to be located within these areas; and*
 - ii. *rehabilitation of water bodies and their margins and encouraging indigenous vegetation planting.*
- b. *Retain and enhance recreation opportunities and public access, where appropriate, to and along water bodies through provision of esplanade reserves or strips, or creation of adjacent open space parks.*
- c. *Recognise the cultural significance of water resources to Ngāi Tahu and ensure they are managed to maintain and enhance mahinga kai and, where appropriate, Ngāi Tahu whānui access to these resources.*

Response: Restoration of the Styx River margin as part of the proposed plan change and subsequent development of the site is strongly supported by the above policy. Residential development will be separated from the Styx River by the extensive Lower Styx flood area, which will be developed into wetlands and open green space, thereby limiting adverse effects on the river from urban land use. The site's margin along the Styx River is planned to undergo riparian restoration, overseen by suitably qualified consultants. Public accessibility and enjoyment of this part of the river will also be improved, through the introduction of pedestrian and cycling paths in the river's vicinity.

4.2 Effects on Landscape Character and Values

As mentioned under Section 1.1 Landscape Values, the site is not located within any landscape character (including ONL or VAL) or cultural or historic overlays, and as in keeping with its surroundings, currently reflects a semi-rural character.

The proposed plan change to RNN zoning will introduce a substantial difference in the site's current land use and land cover, with the establishment of a high number of residential lots, a commercial area, and extensive blue/green network, as per the indicative scheme plan. Although the level of modification anticipated with the proposed plan change may be great, the changes that are likely to arise are not necessarily considered adverse and should be weighed up against the permitted development under the current SP and RuUF zoning, while also accounting for the beneficial aspects of the proposal.

Within the wider receiving context (referring to the semi-rural periphery to the north of Christchurch), it is expected that the proposed plan change will alter the perception of the area through the subsequent introduction of a small urban centre where land is currently largely vacant. The urban footprint associated with the plan change will be larger than the close by town of Spencerville, but within the wider large-scale landscape will still be considered a small semi-rural settlement. Although the two urban areas won't be physically joined, due to their close proximity they are expected have some interaction as an extension of one another, for example, through access to the beach via Spencerville or use of the commercial area in the Whisper Creek development by Spencerville residents. Particularly, as supported through the anticipated active transport connections along the Styx River and upgrades along the local roads.

Under the current SP zoning an equivalent of approximately 400 households can be developed between dormitory bedrooms, a hotel and resort apartments. While if the 16ha currently zoned as RuUF were developed at a density of 15 households/ha this would provide an additional 240 units, giving an existing development potential of 640 units in total. Initial assessments have concluded that up to 800 residential units could be developed across the development area (at an average density of 15 households/ha) if the plan change application is successful, although this will be refined as the project progresses. The plan change therefore represents an increase in density relative to the current zoning, primarily through the inclusion of the four RuFZ properties.

It should also be noted that under the current SP zoning, there is a 100m building setback from Turners, Teapes and Spencerville Roads (rule 13.9.5.2.3). Under the proposed plan change, it is sought for future residential dwellings to be set back a minimum of 10m from the roads noted above. Although a reduction in building setback requirements from 100m to 10m seems drastic, when considering the potential scale of the building types associated with the respective SP and RNN zoning this change is considered appropriate from a landscape perspective. Individual houses as permitted under RNN zoning (consistent with RNN built form standards) will have a much more modest form when compared to typical clubhouse, hotel and dormitory buildings. Additionally, when combined with a 5m strip of native screening planting, a 10m building setback is considered to be sufficient to mitigate any adverse visual and landscape effects at the site boundary. A setback of greater than 10m is not seen to provide any considerable advantages over a minimum setback of 10m in the context of the proposed RNN zoning and anticipated future built form under this zone.

The area is expected to retain its close association with natural features, with most natural landmarks remaining unchanged as a result of the proposal (Brooklands Lagoon, the Pegasus Bay coastline, and the Waimakariri River). With the proposed plan change and associated development, an opportunity will be provided to restore the site's section of the Styx River margin to support indigenous biodiversity (MM6). The Lower Styx flood area is also proposed to be transformed into a large open green space as noted (MM5), with wetlands and native planting. It is expected that a network of walking and cycle paths will be implemented to provide public access to these areas. The anticipated accessible, and ecologically rich environment will promote a greater sense of ownership, responsibility and responsiveness to the natural environment.

The proposed plan change and consequent development is not anticipated to introduce any drastic change to the overall flat topography, while the expected impact on available views will be discussed in section 4.3 below. With the proposed plan change, land use in the wider area is expected to continue as it is at present, the exception being the site itself which will no longer serve a predominantly agricultural use, as outlined below. Recreational opportunities provided by local destinations such as Bottle Lake Forest, golf courses, Spencer Beach and Brooklands Lagoon will also be able to be utilized as they are at present, with the additional walking and cycling paths expected as part of development under the proposed plan change, further expanding active transport networks and available recreational spaces.

To be noted, if the land is developed as per the SP zoning or remains as it exists at present, the benefits of an increase in biodiversity and an expanded ecological network, as well as public access to these spaces as outlined above, would likely not be gained.

At a site level effects have been assessed as below:

Physical

The proposed plan change will modify the northern part of the site, from largely open and agricultural in character, to one which is denser and more compartmentalized, with a higher concentration of buildings and infrastructure, and a continuous green boundary in the form of the proposed landscape strip (MM1) along Teapes, Turners and Spencerville Road. However, as a large portion of the site, namely the Lower Styx flood area, will remain undeveloped, taking on open green area/ native wetland form, the overall site is still expected to retain a fairly open nature. With development under the proposed plan change it is expected that there will be a shift from predominantly exotic species to predominantly native species, with extensive wetland and green space plantings as mentioned, and restorative riparian planting along the margin of the Styx River. Physically the site will change to reflect a new mix of residential, commercial, storm water management, recreational and ecological habitat uses.

Perceptual

How the site is experienced from a sensory perspective will change with development under the proposed plan change. The northern part of the site will feature scenes and sounds of urban living, with an increased population and greater levels of activity. The southern part of the site is expected to retain a quieter nature, as a result of its naturalized character. Note, the expected visual changes, and effects on visual amenity, are discussed in detail in section 4.3 below.

Associative

The site's associative values are expected to align with the new land uses under the proposed plan change. This includes becoming 'home' and a place of community for a number of new residents, while still retaining a sense of being removed from the larger urban area of Christchurch. The substantial green space and restored Styx River margins are anticipated to generate recreational and ecological values, maintaining a close connection between the land and natural systems/ processes. Overall, this is anticipated to translate into an environment that is of a high quality and cared for.

Overall, it is accepted that the landscape will undergo a change in character if the proposed plan change proceeds. The northern aspect of the site in particular will feature an urban neighbourhood, rather than the present day sparsely clustered dwellings amongst open paddocks, while the southern aspect of the site and Styx River margin will be transformed to create an expansive green space/ wetland. Under the current SP zoning, which forms the permitted baseline, it is already possible to develop the northern part of the site into a hotel, dormitory and resort apartments, and so a change from open paddocks to a built environment in this part of the site should not be considered adverse within itself. Although development under the proposed plan change will likely introduce built form at a larger scale and more widespread density than under the current SP zoning, this will also create invaluable benefits in the context of indigenous biodiversity, active transport connections, and public recreational opportunities, which would unlikely be gained otherwise. Effects on landscape character and values have therefore been assessed as Low.

Temporary Effects

Development under the proposed plan change will generate several temporary effects. These centre largely around the construction stages of any future development, including earthworks, roading works, installation of cycle and pedestrian paths, construction of dwellings and commercial buildings, installation of services and creation of stormwater networks. Temporary effects associated with future development under the proposed

plan change, are expected to be greatest initially, with adverse effects becoming less and benefits becoming greater over time, especially as vegetation and natural habitats establish.

Cumulative Effects

When considered cumulatively with the closest urban area of Spencerville, the proposed residential development as per the proposed plan change to RNN zoning will increase the intensity of development present in the receiving environment. However, as development of the northern aspect of the site is already permitted under the current SP zoning, an increase in development and the presence of built form should not be considered as adverse within itself, as noted above.

Regarding the anticipated ecological restoration of the Styx River and creation of a substantial open green space, when considered cumulatively with existing restoration initiatives along the Styx River, nearby reserves, forests and wetlands, this is considered to contribute to positive outcomes. These spaces, individually and when combined as a network, are expected to have beneficial effects on the well-being of Christchurch and local communities, as well as providing habitat for indigenous fauna and enhancing overall indigenous biodiversity in the Christchurch region.

4.3 Effects on Visual Amenity

Visual effects are a subset to landscape effects and contribute to understanding landscape effects. The visual context of the receiving environment is considered to be a 2000m offset from the edge of the proposed development. This distance has been used due to the receiving environment's flat topography and the location of key visual receptors who may be impacted by the proposed plan change and subsequent development of the site. Views from further away are either not possible or ameliorated by distance.

A series of key viewpoints were selected to show a representative sample of the likely affected parties, with viewpoints from further away not considered necessary as they would have lesser effects. Refer to Appendix 2 for the relevant photos. Viewpoints are generally located on public land, and where possible located as close as possible to existing or proposed residential dwellings, or prominent locations in the receiving landscape. Viewpoints selected are as follows:

VP1 - View north from 143 Lower Styx Road

VP2 - View northwest from 218 Lower Styx Road

VP3 - View southwest from 286 Lower Styx Road

VP 4 - View west from Lower Styx - Heyders Road intersection

VP5 - View south from 287 Spencerville Road

VP6 - View south from 247 Spencerville Road

VP7 - View east from Spencerville - Turners Road intersection

VP8 - View east from Turners - Teapes Road intersection

The following table outlines the Visually Sensitive Receptors represented by each viewpoint and the visual effects they might receive. The table notes the distance to the boundary of the proposal site, the openness of the view, the likely magnitude of effects without mitigation, which mitigation measures apply and concludes with the likely residual visual effects following mitigation.

Table 1: Assessment of Effects on Visually Sensitive Receptors

Viewpoint	Visually Sensitive Receptors (VSR)	Distance from Proposal (m)	Type of View (open, partial, screened)	Magnitude of Effects without mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Effects with Mitigation
1	Residents at 143 and 137 Lower Styx Road Vehicle users of Lower Styx Road	106m	Screened	Very Low	MM5 MM6	Very Low
2	Residents at 206, 218, 224, 228 and 234 Lower Styx Road Vehicle users of Lower Styx Road	120m	Partial	Very Low	MM5 MM6	Very Low
3	Residents of Spencerville Forestry operators in Bottle Lake Forest Vehicle users of Lower Styx Road	120m	Screened	Very Low	MM5 MM6	Very Low
4	Residents of Spencerville Vehicle users of Lower Styx Road	65m	Screened	Very Low	MM5 MM6	Very Low
5	Residents at 287 Spencerville Road Vehicle users of Spencerville Road	230m	Partial	Low-moderate	MM1 MM5	Low
6	Residents at 247 and 250 Spencerville Road Vehicle users of Spencerville Road	20m	Screened	Low-moderate	MM1 MM2 MM3 MM4	Low

7	Residents at 209 and 157 Spencerville Road Residents at 185, 175 and 163 Turners Road Vehicle users of Spencerville and Turners Road	17m	Partial	Moderate	MM1 MM2 MM3 MM4	Low
8	Residents at 153, 143, 138 Turners Road Residents at 18 and 20 Teapes Road Vehicle users of Turners Road and Teapes Road	20m	Partial	Moderate	MM1 MM2 MM3 MM4	Low

VP1 and 2 – Views from Lower Styx Road

Description of existing view – Viewpoints 1 and 2 show views from Lower Styx Road towards the southernmost part of the proposal site. Viewpoint 1 shows Lower Styx Road in the foreground, behind which the Styx River is located, with a backdrop of dense willows screening any wider views. Viewpoint 2 shows an existing vehicle bridge to the proposal site. Along this entryway a limited glimpse is provided to the farmland beyond, however further views are largely obscured by the dense Willows which line the river either side of the accessway.

Description of effects – Limited visibility of the proposed development is expected from viewpoints 1 and 2. At present the existing Willows screen the proposal site from Lower Styx Road and the properties positioned in this area. Although with time the Willows are likely to be removed, with restoration of the river margin (MM6), this will likely be a gradual process with alternative native species of a substantial grade (to shade and support to river's ecology) taking their place. Therefore, with the proposed plan change, this boundary is expected to retain a high degree of screening vegetation. Furthermore, despite being in close proximity to the proposal site, any residential development will be located approximately 615m (VP1) and 240m (VP2) away (at the nearest point) from these viewpoint locations. These distances to possible future built form, with additional wetlands and native plantings in between (MM5), will further alleviate any adverse visual effects. Visual effects have therefore been assessed as Very Low.

VP3 and 4 – Views from Spencerville, Bottle Lake Forest and Lower Styx Road

Description of existing view – Viewpoint 3 depicts the view looking southwest down Lower Styx Road, with the Styx River and proposal site in the right of the image, and Bottle Lake Forest in the left. In this view the proposal site is hidden behind the dense screen of Willows which lines the northern side of the Styx River.

Viewpoint 4 shows the view from the gravel turning bay at the Lower Styx Road and Heyders Road intersection. A grass verge is present in the foreground, behind which the Styx River is seen, with dense vegetation lining the opposite bank. Vegetation is dominated by established tall Willows, interspersed with some flaxes and cabbage trees, with carex species along the waterline.

Description of effects – Future development as a result of the proposed plan change would currently be fully screened from these viewpoints by the dense vegetation lining the proposal site side of the Styx River. Similarly to Viewpoints 1 and 2 above, with restoration of the river margin (MM6) it is expected that the exotic Willows will be replaced by native plantings, which would retain vegetative screening of the site in these locations. Additionally, these viewpoints are located approximately 750m (VP3) and 840m (VP4) from the anticipated residential development as per the indicative scheme plan. These distances, and the planted wetland/ greenspace nature of the land separating future residential areas from these viewpoints, further limit adverse visual effects. Visual effects have therefore been assessed as Very Low.

VP5 and 6 – Views from Spencerville Road

Description of existing view – Viewpoint 5 is taken from 287 Spencerville Road, looking across Spencerville Road towards the site. In this view open fields and farm fencing can be seen, with various mature trees dotted throughout the landscape. The path of the Styx River can also be made out, through the recognizable band of Willows along the riverbank. The image is backdropped by taller shelterbelts, Bottle Lake Forest and distant views of the Port Hills. Viewpoint 6 from 247 Spencerville Road provides limited views of the site. This image shows Spencerville Road, behind which mature exotic trees associated with existing dwellings on the proposal site, largely restricts further views.

Description of effects – Views from 287 Spencerville Road are more open than the available view from 247 Spencerville Road. Under the proposed plan change, this outlook will predominantly be towards the green space/ wetland area (MM5) of the indicative scheme plan, with the grassed paddocks of 266 Spencerville Road (not part of the proposal site) remaining as at present in the foreground. Although it is expected that the proposed green space/ wetlands will be discernible beyond the fields of 266 Spencerville Road, an outlook to this planting is considered pleasant, not negative. It is possible that some residential development may be visible in the periphery of these views, but it is expected that these views would be partial and limited, hindered by the proposed landscape buffer (MM1) and plantings associated with the wetland/ green space (MM5). Visual effects have therefore been assessed as Low.

Views towards the site from Viewpoint 6 are more enclosed as described above. These enclosed views of the site are expected to be retained by the proposed landscape strip (MM1), while a more typical rural view will be further reinforced by the 10m building setback (MM2), rural boundary treatments (MM3), and internalization of vehicle crossings for future residential lots (MM4). Although glimpses into residential development may be available via access roads into the development (as per the indicative scheme plan), this will provide only a small viewshaft amongst an otherwise green boundary, with the scale of the development unlikely to be able to be fully discerned. Further detailed design in future can additionally support pleasant views along access roads, through the considered design of road reserves and implementation of street trees to maintain a pleasant environment. As outlooks from VP6 will be dominated by a green planted boundary, as is commonly found in semi-rural areas, with visibility to future residential development limited to access roads, visual effects have been assessed as Low.

VP7 and 8 – Views from Turners Road and Teapes Road

Description of existing view – Viewpoint 7 depicts the intersection of Spencerville Road and Turners Road, beyond which the property at 174 Spencerville Road is seen, which forms the northwestern corner of the proposal site. This property features a mix of various plantings along its boundary, including a cluster of cabbage trees on the corner behind a post and rail fence. Beyond the boundary plantings limited views of grass paddocks and sheds are visible, ultimately backdropped by established trees and shelterbelts.

VP8 is taken from the intersection of Teapes and Turners Roads, with the driveway and large sheds of 144 Turners Road evident on the left of the image. Tall Poplars and Birch Trees are seen centrally in the image, along with one of the dwellings on the 165 Turners Road property, with Teapes Road and the boundary plantings of 138 Turners Road and 20 Teapes Road located on the right.

Description of effects – From these locations, mitigation measures will largely restrict views of the proposal site and future residential development under the proposed plan change. The proposed landscape planting strip (MM1), 10m building setback (MM2), rural boundary treatments (MM3) and restriction of vehicle crossings (MM4) will maintain predominant views of greenery from these viewpoints. Again, residential development may be visible along small sections of these roads, via proposed access roads, although these are likely to only provide brief glimpses of urban form when travelling along Teapes and Turners Road. Additionally, 143 and 138 Turners Road, and 20 and 18 Teapes Road already feature established plantings along their boundaries which face the proposal site. Although these plantings cannot be fully relied upon for visual mitigation, as they are outside of the proposal site, their presence is still expected to contribute to lessening adverse visual effects. Overall, visual effects are assessed to be Low from Viewpoints 7 and 8.

5 . C O N C L U S I O N

In terms of landscape character and values, subject to the mitigation measures proposed and future development aligning with the indicative scheme plan/ proposed ODP, effects on landscape character and values have been assessed as Low in relation to the proposed plan change. The greatest change will be in the northern part of the proposal site, where the current rural and semi-rural character, will transform into an urban character. However, as built form and development is already permitted in this part of the site under the existing zoning and ODP, effects on landscape character are considered less than they may initially appear. In the southern part of the site, a substantial area of wetlands and open green space is planned, where land is unsuitable for residential development due to flooding hazards. Along with restoration of the Styx River margin along the site boundary, the considerable area of ecological habitat and restorative native planting to take place, interspersed with walking and cycling paths, is anticipated to create valuable positive effects.

In terms of visual amenity, effects are considered to be Very Low to Low. Views from Spencerville and Lower Styx Road will consist largely of favourable outlooks to the restored Styx River margin and green space/ wetland area, as per the proposed scheme plan and mitigation measures. Views of future residential living, from Spencerville Road, Turners Road and Teapes Road, will be screened by a proposed landscape

planting strip. This visual buffer will also be further reinforced by rural fencing typologies, a 10m built form setback and the absence of individual vehicle crossings to future residential lots from these roads. Thereby, a largely continuous extent of boundary planting is expected to occupy these views, maintaining pleasant outlooks from these roads and nearby properties.