

MOTURUA PROPERTIES LTD.

MOTURUA ISLAND

Proposed dwelling

landscape assessment

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	4
2.0	THE APPLICATION	4
3.0	EXISTING ENVIRONMENT	5
3.1	The Site and its context	5
3.2	Statutory Matters	7
3.2.1	<i>The Resource Management Act (1991)</i>	7
3.2.2	<i>The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (2010)</i>	7
3.2.3	<i>The Regional Coastal Plan for Northland (2004)</i>	8
3.2.4	<i>Operative Far North District Plan</i>	9
3.3	Visual catchment	11
4.0	IDENTIFIED NATURAL CHARACTER VALUES	11
5.0	IDENTIFIED LANDSCAPE VALUES	13
6.0	ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS	14
6.1	Background	14
6.2	Assessment of Effects	14
6.2.1	Landscape and natural character: Biophysical – Abiotic attributes	14
6.2.2	Landscape and natural character: Biophysical – Biotic attributes	14
6.2.3	Landscape and natural character: Experiential attributes	15
6.2.4	Summary of natural character effects	15
6.3.5	Landscape: Spiritual, cultural and associative attributes	16
6.2.6	Summary of landscape effects	16
6.2.7	Visual amenity effects	16
7.0	EFFECTS ON STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS	17
8.0	CONCLUSION	17
APPENDIX 1	Figures	19
APPENDIX 2	Assessment Methodology	-
APPENDIX 3	Northland RPS Worksheet	-

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Simon Cocker Landscape Architecture has been engaged by the Moturua properties Ltd, to undertake a landscape assessment for a resource consent to undertake earthworks and to construct a dwelling on the coastal edge within Lot 2 DP 57873 Moturua Island (refer to [Figures 1](#) and [2a](#) in [Appendix 1](#)). Clearance of vegetation not more than ten years old will also be undertaken.

This document will comprise a description of the site, the characteristics of the proposal and an analysis of the landscape, identification of any affected parties or individuals, an assessment of the landscape, natural character and visual amenity effects of the activity.

The assessment has been prepared by a Registered Landscape Architect with reference to the Te Tangi a Te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines¹ and in accordance with the NZILA (New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects) Code of Conduct². The assessment methodology is detailed in Appendix 2.

In summary, the significance of effects identified in this assessment are based on a seven-point scale which includes very low; low; moderate-low; moderate, moderate to high, high, and very high. For the purpose of this assessment, low to moderate equates to 'minor' in RMA terminology.

A site visit was undertaken on 16 August 2024 between the hours of 10.15 – 11.30am. The weather during this visit was sunny with light winds. High tide on the 16 June was at 3.46am (2.03m).

Documents referred to in the preparation of this report are as follows:

- Site plan. Williams and King. August 2024;
- O'Brien Design Consulting. Onsite waste water report. 21 August 2024;
- Plan set, prepared by Lockwood Ltd. 27 August 2024;
- Northern Archaeological Research. Archaeological Survey and assessment of The Goodfellow Residential Proposal, Lot 2 57873, Hahangarua Bay Moturua Island, Bay of Islands. May 2024.
- DoC website: Historic Moturua Island Scenic Reserve³, and;
- Goddard Melinda. WWII Mine Control Station, Moturua Island. Historic heritage Assessment. DoC 2010.

2.0 THE APPLICATION

The proposal is detailed in [Figures 2a – 2d](#). It involves the construction of a small dwelling (with a floor area of 141.30m²), with associated vegetation clearance and earthworks to create a usable and fire-safe curtilage.

The building will be set back some 32m from MHWS, and will be separated from the beach and CMA by a swathe of native coastal forest of some 20m in width (refer to [Photo 1](#)). The extent of vegetation clearance is shown on [Figure 2a](#). This will affect an area of young regenerating shrubland of some 8 – 10years of age, with a mean height of around 3 – 6m in height. Species contained within this area includes karamu (*Coprosma robusta / macrocarpa*), kawakawa (*Piper excelsum*), pate (*Schefflera digitata*), mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*), and karo (*Pittosporum crassifolium*). A number of larger, tree species are located on the margins of the area to be cleared and these include Puriri (*Vitex lucens*), karaka (*Corynocarpus*

¹ *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, Tuia Pito Ora* New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022

² Contained in Appendix 1 of: http://www.nzila.co.nz/media/50906/registered_membership_guide_final.pdf

³ <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/northland/places/moturua-island-scenic-reserve/moturua-island-scenic-reserve/>

laevigatus), and tī kōuka (*Cordyline australis*) (refer to [Photo 2](#)).

The area of clearance includes a 'setback' of 5m from the façades of the proposed building for the purpose of fire protection.

Earthworks will comprise 102.23m³ of cut and 58.65m³ of fill. This will enable the construction of a platform to an RL of 6.090m.

As is illustrated on [Figures 2b – 2d](#), the maximum height of the proposed building will be 5.4m above natural ground level.. The building will be capped by a 6° monopitch roof clad with Colorsteel (colour = Karaka, LRV = 8%). The walls of the building will be timber weatherboards with an extruded aluminium sheathing which is mechanically pressed onto the exterior boards, coloured Resene Lichen (LRV = 24%), or similar. The joinery will be aluminium, coloured Flaxpod (LRV = 6%).

A deck will be constructed on the seaward side of the building, and a grassed area will be created on the landward side.

3.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 The site and its context

The Site is located on the south eastern side of Moturua Island, facing toward (and separated by 3km) from the entrance to Parekura Bay (refer to [Photo 3](#), [Figure 1](#) and [Figure 3](#)). Like the coast of the mainland, the island's coast is lined with a scattering of islands and reefs with a sequence of headlands, defining a sequence of small coves. The south eastern coast, on which the subject Site is located, is characterised by a series of small coves and rocky points. The main embayments are identified as Awaawaroa Bay – to the north east of, and separated from the subject Site by a headland, and Hahangarua Bay. This latter bay is punctuated on its south western end by a stubby headland, and a rocky offshore islet identified as Pakatahi Island.

Many of the headlands that punctuate the mainland, and island coast (including Pupuha Point to the south west), Pakatahi and Kuiamokimoki Islands, and Paeroa Pa on the headland immediately to the north east, form strategic points that were occupied by pā sites.

The characteristics that define the area's coastal character include steep, rocky coastal flanks, fringing and offshore reefs, small islets, minor beaches and pronounced coastal ridges and spurs. Vegetation patterns are characterised by a well-developed fringe of pōhutukawa, extensive areas of coastal shrubland and pockets of broadleaf and hardwood forest. On the mainland, but to a lesser degree on Moturua, the areas of shrubland and forest are fragmented or interspersed by remnant areas of coarse kikuyu that signal past grazing. It is both the headlands and the regular sequence of small beaches that lie between those projections that establish the coastal pattern. A fringe of pohutukawa runs along much of the coastal flank, emerging from a more consistent cover of indigenous shrubland that is a strong unifying theme.

The Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) worksheet for the Islands of the Bay of Islands unit, describes the unit as comprising a "*...cluster of predominantly rocky coast islands, reefs & islets that is predominantly focused in the area between Rawhiti & Tapeka Point but with two outliers in the form of the islands situated immediately offshore of Paihia. Most of the islands have a moderately steep rolling relief with coastlines consisting of a mixture of steep rocky coastal flanks with fringing reefs or contained sandy embayments, defined typically by moderately pronounced headlands.*"

Built development is a component of the mainland coastline where built form tends to be focused in embayments,

leaving the headlands and peninsulas almost entirely free of development. This pattern is repeated on Moturua, where residential settlement and built form is located on the south eastern edge of the island, and contained within Hahangarua Bay (refer to [Figure 3](#)). To the south west of the subject Site, a cluster of buildings are located on the grassed back-beach flats, and nestled on the northern side of the headland and ridge associated with Pupuha Point.

Separated from this southern cluster, a second, dispersed grouping of buildings occupies the north eastern portion of Hahangarua Bay. This comprises a small two storey dwelling, a cottage set back some 200m from the beach, and a second small (red-roofed) cottage located within the subject property

The forest and shrubland vegetation occupies the low hills which contain the 'back-bay' flats, and provides a sense of naturalness and containment whilst the 'back-bay' flats themselves have been developed as gardens which accommodate a number of dwellings and other structures.

As can be seen from the built modification and the development of gardens has resulted in this flat 'back-beach' area assuming a settled and residential character. [Photo 4](#) illustrates the 'back-beach' area and shows the grassed, 'garden' character of these inhabited areas.

Although public access to the beach adjoining the proposed building site is possible by boat, the proximity to, and visibility of the dwellings from the beach, as well as the 'garden' character of the 'back-beach' area, lend the southern and mid portions of the beach a 'private' appearance which discourages the general public from disembarking. At the northern end, the existing red roofed cottage (refer to [photo 5](#)) is visible through the swathe of vegetation that contains the inland side of the beach (refer to [photo 6](#)), but otherwise, the swathe of vegetation is largely unbroken.

The ONL worksheet identifies that the islands contain a number of pā including Hikurangi, Haikai & an intensity of recorded sites of pre-European occupation & use, with these being particularly focused on the coastal margins. The islands also feature a number of post European arch sites. In addition, it notes a recorded site of anchorage by Captain Cook near Motarohi Island (Robertson Island) and old hospital site on Moturua. The islands have a long standing role as anchorages and early European utilisation related to mission activities.

Other sources note that Moturua Island has a long history of human occupation from some of the earliest Polynesian settler sites. The pre-European archaeological sites on the island consist of an early midden site, and evidence of late Maori occupation is defined by headland pa, terraces, pits and gardening areas. As previously stated, the island was visited by the early explorer Captain Cook in 1769 and he recorded the Polynesian in origin plant paper mulberry growing here, which was introduced by the earliest settlers to New Zealand. French explorer Marion Du Fresne set up camp in one of the bays of Moturua and stayed here for 3 months in 1772, setting up temporary camp on the island in Wai-iti and Waipao Bay. As indicated in the "Plan Du Port Marion" of the Bay of Islands, the French set up a hospital, forge (iron working), a small tent for the officers and quarters for the guards located near a little stream.

Due to various occurrences, relations soured as Du Fresne and some of his crew were attacked while they were fishing in Te Kuri's cove in Manawara Bay. The French retaliated, and Paeroa pa was sacked and burnt to the ground. It is estimated that 250 Māori warriors were killed during the battle.

A week later, the remaining French sailed out of the bay and left a claim to the land in a bottle that was buried next to the little stream in Waipao Bay. Although the French destroyed Paeroa pa they did however map it in great detail, and this remains one of the best examples of an early post contact pa.

At a wider level, the ONL worksheet also characterises the Bay of Islands as being amongst New Zealand's most publicised and well known coastal landscapes, both in terms of tourism promotion and national identity.

It states that the “...islands’ role as an outer “breakwater” to the inner Bay of Islands creates an area of generally sheltered water within which a multitude of small coves, beaches, channels & headlands offer a considerable diversity of spaces & areas of character.....

.....As a cruising destination, the Bay of Islands is regarded as one of the best in New Zealand and internationally. It is also favoured for recreational day boating, fishing and summer camping in the DoC reserve on Urupukapuka.....

.....A high measure of complexity, naturalness and limited evidence of human intervention is experienced in the strongly coastal context of the Bay of Islands, and these factors are pivotal in its identity.”

3.2 Statutory Matters

A number of planning provisions have been considered both in the development of the proposal and the formation of this assessment of effects. Those planning provisions which are most relevant to the potential natural character, landscape and visual effects as well as the effects on ONLs and ONFs are identified and summarised below. Figures 4a - c reproduces the Operative District Plan and the Regional Policy Statement maps for the area showing the extent of areas of High Natural Character (HNCA) and Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONL).

3.2.1 The Resource Management Act 1991

Part 2 of the Resource Management Act (RMA) sets its purpose and principles. Part 2, Section 5 states that the purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Section 6 sets out the matters of importance that must be recognised and provided for in achieving the purpose of the RMA. Section 7 contains other matters that must be given particular regard to, and section 8 states that the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi must be taken into account in achieving the purpose of the RMA.

Section 7 identifies a range of matters that shall be given particular regard to in achieving the purpose of the RMA. Of relevance to this proposal is section 7(c) the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values. This is considered in this report in relation to potential effects on landscape elements and character, and visual amenity.

The above matters, together with the Regional Policy Statement (under the Northland Regional Council (‘NRC’)) and District Plan (under the jurisdiction of the Far North District Council) provide background to inform the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

3.2.2 The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (2010)

The NZCPS includes a number of policies which are relevant to this proposal, given the 2012 Mapping Project mapping identifies a coastal environment line overlapping the Site. Policies 13, 14 and 15 are most relevant, these state:

Policy 13 Preservation of natural character;

(1) *To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and to protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*

(b) *avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment.*

Policy 14 Restoration of natural character;

Promote restoration or rehabilitation of the natural character of the coastal environment, including by:

- (a) *identifying areas and opportunities for restoration or rehabilitation;*
- (b) *providing policies, rules and other methods directed at restoration or rehabilitation in regional policy statements, and plans;*
- (c) *where practicable, imposing or reviewing restoration or rehabilitation conditions on resource consents and designations, including for the continuation of activities; and recognising that where degraded areas of the coastal environment require restoration or rehabilitation, possible approaches include:*
 - (i) *restoring indigenous habitats and ecosystems, using local genetic stock where practicable; or*
 - (ii) *encouraging natural regeneration of indigenous species, recognising the need for effective weed and animal pest management; or*
 - (iii) *creating or enhancing habitat for indigenous species; or*
 - (iv) *rehabilitating dunes and other natural coastal features or processes, including saline wetlands and intertidal saltmarsh; or*
 - (v) *restoring and protecting riparian and intertidal margins; or*
 - (vi) *reducing or eliminating discharges of contaminants; or*
 - (vii) *removing redundant structures and materials that have been assessed to have minimal heritage or amenity values and when the removal is authorised by required permits, including an archaeological authority under the Historic Places Act 1993; or*
 - (viii) *restoring cultural landscape features; or*
 - (ix) *redesign of structures that interfere with ecosystem processes; or*
 - (x) *decommissioning or restoring historic landfill and other contaminated sites which are, or have the potential to, leach material into the coastal marine area.*

Policy 15 Natural features and natural landscapes.

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

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

3.2.3 Northland Regional Policy Statement (2016)

In 2012, the Northland Regional Mapping Project ("Mapping Project") was undertaken by the Northland Mapping Group (on behalf of the NRC). The purpose of the Mapping Project was to determine the delineation of the Coastal Environment, and the natural heritage areas within the region comprising: Outstanding Natural Landscapes ("ONL"),

Outstanding Natural Features ("ONF") and areas of High or Outstanding Natural Character (H/ONCA). These are now included within the Regional Policy Statement (operative 2016) for Northland, thereby meeting the requirements under the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 ("NZCPS") and the Resource Management Act 1991.

Moturua Island has been identified as being overlain by an ONL, (as discussed in Section 6 of this report), in the Northland Regional Policy Statement Maps.

The RPS has identified the coastal environment and a number of high and outstanding natural character areas as well as the delineation of ONL and ONF areas. The most relevant Objective for this application is Objective 3.14.

Identify and protect from inappropriate subdivision, use and development;

- (a) *The qualities and characteristics that make up the natural character of the coastal environment, and the natural character of freshwater bodies and their margins;*
- (b) *The qualities and characteristics that make up outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes;*
- (c) *The integrity of historic heritage*

The RPS also introduces a number of policies which aim to bring the RPS in line with the NZCPS under Part 4 of the RPS. Section 4.6.1 outlines the policy relevant to managing effects on natural character, features / landscapes and heritage.

(1) In the coastal environment:

- (b) Avoid adverse effects of subdivision use, and development on the characteristic and qualities which make up the outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes.*
- (c) Where (a) does not apply, avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of subdivision, use and development on natural character, natural features and natural landscapes. Methods which may achieve this include:

 - (i) Ensuring the location, intensity, scape and form of subdivision and built development in appropriate having regard to natural elements, landforms and processes, including vegetation patterns, ridgelines, headlands, peninsulas, dune systems, reefs and freshwater bodies and their margins: and*
 - (ii) In areas of high natural character, minimising to the extent practicable indigenous vegetation clearance and modification (including earthworks / disturbance, structures, discharges and extraction of water) to natural wetlands, the beds of lakes, rivers and the coastal marine area and their margins; and*
 - (iii) Encouraging any new subdivision and built development to consolidate within and around existing settlements or where natural character and landscape has already been compromised.**

When considering whether there are any adverse effects on the characteristics and qualities of the natural character, natural features and landscape values in terms of (1)(a), whether there are any significant adverse effects and the scale of any adverse effects in terms of (1)(b) and (2), and in determining the character, intensity and scale of the adverse effects:

- a) Recognise that a minor or transitory effect may not be an adverse effect;*
- b) Recognise that many areas contain ongoing use and development that:

 - (i) Were present when the area was identified as high or outstanding or have subsequently been lawfully established*
 - (ii) May be dynamic, diverse or seasonal;**
- c) Recognise that there may be more than minor cumulative adverse effects from minor or transitory adverse effects; and*

Have regard to any restoration and enhancement on the characteristics and qualities of that area of natural character, natural features and/or natural landscape.

With regard to the extent and location of ONL and natural character areas, policy 4.5.2 in the RPS notes that individual site assessment may be needed to confirm the accuracy of these when considering individual sites. The explanation states:

This policy recognises that despite best endeavours, the maps may not always be accurate at individual property or site-scale. Therefore qualified site or property- specific assessment at greater resolution and accuracy may be able to demonstrate that the values are not present or are of less (or more) significance than depicted on the maps or that a lesser (or greater) degree of sensitivity and / or caution is warranted in relation to specific proposals

3.2.4 Operative Far North District Plan

The site is zoned General Coastal and is within an Outstanding Landscape (refer to [Figures 4a, 4b and 4c](#)).

Objectives and policies in the Coastal Environment Chapter, the General Coastal Zone section, and the Landscape and Natural features Chapter have a focus on the protection and enhancement of natural character and landscape values, and the protection of visual qualities.

The proposal will be non complying due to the building being the second on the site and will exceed residential development of one unit per 20ha of land (permitted activity) and one unit per 6ha of land (discretionary activity).

Under rules 10.6.5.1.1, 10.6.5.2.2 & 10.6.5.3.1 (Visual Amenity), 12.1.6.1.5 and 12.1.6.2.1 (Buildings within outstanding landscapes), the application will be restricted discretionary.

Assessment Criteria

10.6.5.5 lists the following assessment criteria for non-complying activities, and states that the Council shall have regard to the assessment criteria set out in Chapter 11.

11.1 RESIDENTIAL INTENSITY (INCLUDING MINOR RESIDENTIAL UNITS) AND SCALE OF ACTIVITIES

- (a) *The character and appearance of building(s) and the extent to which the effects they generate can be avoided, remedied or mitigated, consistent with the principal activity on the site and with other buildings in the surrounding area.*
- (b) *The siting of the building(s), decks and outdoor areas relative to adjacent properties and the road frontage, in order to avoid visual domination and loss of privacy and sunlight.*
- (c) *The size, location and design of open space and the extent to which trees and garden plantings are utilised for mitigating adverse effects.*
- (d) *The ability of the immediate environment to cope with the effects of increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic.*
- (e) *The location and design of vehicular and pedestrian access, on site vehicle manoeuvring and parking areas and the ability of those to mitigate the adverse effects of additional traffic.*
- (f) *Location in respect of the roading hierarchy – the activity should be assessed with regard to an appropriate balance between providing access and the function of the road.*
- (g) *The extent to which hours of operation are appropriate in terms of the surrounding environment.*
- (h) *Noise generation and the extent to which reduction measures are used.*
- (i) *Any servicing requirements and/or constraints of the site – whether the site has adequate water supply and provision for disposal of waste products and stormwater.*
- (j) *Whether the development is designed in a way that avoids, remedies or mitigates any adverse effects of stormwater discharge from the site into reticulated stormwater systems and/or natural water bodies.*
- (k) *The ability to provide adequate opportunity for landscaping and buildings and for all outdoor activities associated with the residential unit(s) permitted on the site.*
- (l) *The degree to which mitigation measures are proposed for loss of open space and vegetation.*
- (m) *Any adverse effects on the life supporting capacity of soils.*
- (n) *The extent of visual and aural privacy between residential units on the site and their associated outdoor spaces.*
- (o) *Visual effects of site layout on the natural character of the coastal environment.*
- (p) *The effect on indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna.*
- (q) *The extent to which the activity may cause or exacerbate natural hazards or may be adversely affected by natural hazards, and therefore increase the risk to life, property and the environment.*
- (r) *Proximity to rural production activities and potential for incompatible and reverse sensitivity effects.*

11.5 VISUAL AMENITY IN THE GENERAL COASTAL, SOUTH KERIKERI INLET AND COASTAL LIVING ZONES

- (a) *The size, bulk, height and siting of the building or addition relative to skyline, ridges, areas of indigenous vegetation and habitat of indigenous fauna, or outstanding landscapes and natural features.*
- (b) *The extent to which landscaping of the site, and in particular the planting of indigenous trees, can mitigate adverse visual effects.*
- (c) *The location and design of vehicle access, manoeuvring and parking areas.*
- (d) *The means by which permanent screening of the building from public viewing points on a public road, public reserve, or the foreshore may be achieved.*
- (e) *The degree to which the landscape will retain the qualities that give it naturalness and visual value as seen from the coastal marine area.*
- (f) *Where a building is in the coastal environment and it is proposed to be located on a ridgeline, whether other more suitable sites should be used and if not, whether landscaping, planting or other forms of mitigation can be used to ensure no more than minor adverse visual effects on the coastal environment.*
- (g) *The extent to which the activity may cause or exacerbate natural hazards or may be adversely affected by natural hazards, and therefore increase the risk to life, property and the environment.*
- (h) *the extent to which private open space can be provided for future uses ;*
- (i) *the extent to which the siting, setback and design of building(s) avoid visual dominance on landscapes, adjacent sites and the surrounding environment;*
- (j) *the extent to which non-compliance affects the privacy, outlook and enjoyment of private open spaces on adjacent sites.*

12.1.6.2.1 BUILDINGS WITHIN OUTSTANDING LANDSCAPES

The Council will restrict the exercise of its discretion to:

- (i) *the location of the building; and*
- (ii) *the size, bulk and height of the building in relation to ridgelines, areas of indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna, existing trees and other natural features; and*
- (iii) *the degree to which the landscape will retain the qualities that make it outstanding, including naturalness, and visual and amenity values; and (iv) the design of the building; and*
- (iv) *the location and design of associated vehicle access, manoeuvring and parking areas; and*
- (iv) *the extent to which planting can mitigate visual effects; and*
- (v) *the means by which permanent screening of the building from public viewing points on a public road, public reserve, or the foreshore may be achieved, and*
- (vi) *the cumulative visual effects of all buildings on the site*

3.3 Visual catchment

The visual catchment associated with the Site is constrained by the enclosed nature of the landward vegetation and landform, the swathe of vegetation which separates the proposed building site from the beach, and the lack of proximate potential viewers.

In addition, the headlands and islet landforms limit and constrain the area of views from the CMA. Views from the beach are represented by [Photos 1, 7 and 8](#). These illustrate how the proposed building site is – with the exception of filtered views from immediately perpendicular to the site, the site is invisible.

Representative views from the CMA are included as [Photos 3, 6, 9 and 10](#). As with views from the beach, filtered views are possible from the water when close to the beach, and perpendicular to the building site, but from more distant locations within the bay – as represented by the photos – the site is not visible due to the screening vegetation.

4.0 IDENTIFIED NATURAL CHARACTER VALUES

In terms of the abiotic and biotic attributes of the wider landscape, the landform and its native vegetation cover retains high values and naturalness, with limited modification and native vegetation cover – much of it relatively recently established on the Site's backdrop hillslopes.

The experiential attributes of the site comprise the interpretation of human experience of the coastal environment and notwithstanding the presence of built development and manicured garden on the back beach flat adjoining the Site (and other isolated pockets of residential development along the coastline to the west and east), the context of the site displays a high level of naturalness. The Site and its context also displays a moderate sense of remoteness and wildness, although this is eroded somewhat by the presence of the aforementioned built development. The vegetation cover on the coastal margins 'knits' the subject site into its landscape context contributes to the legibility, expressiveness and naturalness of the landscape.

This conclusion is reflected by the Northland Regional Policy Statement (RPS), GIS maps which identify the remnant native vegetation, and the waters of the Te Rāwhiti Inlet as displaying a high level of natural character. The details of the natural character areas are as follows (refer to Figures 4b and 4c):

11/46: **Motorua Is** [sic]⁴

The mapping of high natural character includes the majority of the island, but excludes the settled and modified areas associated with the two clusters of built development and their garden setting (refer to [Figure 4b](#)). As is evident from [Figure 4c](#), the High Natural Character Area overlays the grassed area, orchard and exotic vegetation in the vicinity of the

⁴ HNCA refers to Moturua Island

proposed building area. At a detailed scale, this pocket of modification and exotic vegetation displays a lower level of natural character.

This HNCA is described as follows:

Largely hill slopes, primarily with kanuka dominant shrubland & forest. A fire in the early 1980's means that there is mainly manuka-kanuka-gorse shrubland & low forest in the north-east. Mixed broadleaved species are present in the larger gullies along with taller kanuka. In some areas (mainly the central eastern section) there are some weed trees - mainly hakea and wattles. There are several small flat shore areas dominated by introduced grasses- north-east, east and north-west. There is fringing pohutukawa trees along much of the shore. The northern exposed side of the island is dominated by steep cliffs with some sea caves. The vegetation includes mixed native & introduced shrubs and grasses. Several small sand beaches- those in the east are fringed by kikuyu, while in the west there is a small dune with spinifex, pingao & native shrubs. Part of Project Island Song (animal pest-free)

Relatively large area of indigenous vegetation with some patches of exotic trees and weed invasion along track margins. Small areas of human-mediated hydrological or landform changes from recent track construction and historic fortifications. Free of animal pests

11/49: Pakatahi Is

Two small rocky islands with mixed broadleaved shrubland & low forest with pohutukawa; mixed native & alien shrubs; and pohutukawa on northern island. Part of Project Island Song (animal pests eradicated)

Relatively mature indigenous vegetation relative to the site conditions and natural disturbance history/regime, but some areas of alien shrubs. Minimal human-mediated hydrological or landform changes and no obvious human structures. Animal pest free

00/11 Outer Bay of Islands:

Subtidal reefs, channels & flats and intertidal flats in the outer Bay of Islands. Good flushing by oceanic waters and winds. Some water quality impacts from catchment of Bay of Islands, but a relatively low level of deposition of sediment as most of this drops out in the more sheltered and deeper waters of the Rāwhiti Basin (which is ranked as less than high, and defines the southern boundaries of this unit.)

Based on the values identified in the statutory documents, it is assessed that the landscape and natural character values of the Site and its wider context are high, but as stated in policy 4.5.2 of the RPS, the mapping of the HNCA was at a coarse scale, and a more detailed evaluation should be undertaken at a site specific scale to determine the precise extent of such areas.

Overall it is assessed that the terrestrial natural character values of Moturua Island, and Pakatahi Island are high. However – as shown on Figure 4c – the modification associated with the back beach areas – the dwellings, accessory buildings, and manicured gardens on the coastal flat adjoining the subject Site detract from these values. This pocket of modification is spatially contained by the rising landform to the west, and by the vegetated headlands to the north and south, and so its detracting effect is limited to a very defined area, within which the levels of natural character are markedly diminished, and are assessed as being (at most) moderate). It is however, questioned whether the narrow strips of vegetation (planted by the owner) – at most 3m in width – qualify as being identified as displaying high levels of natural character as shown on Figure 4c.

5.0 IDENTIFIED LANDSCAPE VALUES

The Far North District Landscape Assessment⁵ (FNDLA) identifies the Site as being within the 'Islands of the Bay of Islands' (Unit C2) unit, a landscape unit which forms part of the 'Rocky coast interspersed with beaches' landscape category.

A number of characteristic components of the units are listed in conclusion to the description on page 23 of this document. Those of relevance are as follows:

- *A varied and interesting coastal alignment, bring a strong sense of mystery and anticipation;*
- *Strong vegetation patterns, dominated by pohutukawa and frequently reinforced by coastal shrubland associations*
- *The variety provided by the rocky coast and sandy bays which characterizes the category;*
- *The extreme sensitivity of most of the headlands, cliff lines and coastal ridgelines found in the units;*
- *A largely successful integration of existing buildings in the more modestly developed portions of the units.*

The assessment determined that unit C2 had a sensitivity of 7, (out of a total of 7). In the FNDLA, a ranking of 7 equates to 'outstanding'. The Operative District Plan identifies the terrestrial landscape of the entirety of Moturua Island as being Outstanding (refer to Figure 4a).

In the intervening 23 years since 1995 when the FNDLA was prepared, the landscape of the bay has undergone some change in terms of the settlement that has occurred and this has affected the landscape values of the area to some degree. In 2013 the Northland Regional Council undertook the Northland Mapping Project, which sought to update the mapping of Outstanding Natural Landscapes, areas of natural high and outstanding character and to delineate the coastal environment.

The Northland Mapping Project worksheet for the Islands of the Bay of Islands (refer to Appendix 3) characterizes the unit as comprising a cluster of predominantly rocky coast islands, reefs and islets Most of the islands have a moderately steep rolling relief with coastlines consisting of a mixture of steep rocky coastal flanks with fringing reefs or contained sandy embayments, defined typically by moderately pronounced headlands.

It notes that, in terms of its biotic values:

Moturua island group displays a diversity of bird life including several threatened bird species, two of which have been successfully introduced to Moturua Island. It hosts threatened and regionally significant plant species and a threatened snail species. Representative site for type (a) kanuka coastal forest. It also has areas of coastal shrubland

Notably, the worksheet expresses the view that:

A high measure of complexity, naturalness and limited evidence of human intervention is experienced in the strongly coastal context of the Bay of Islands, and these factors are pivotal in its identity.

Within the Northland Regional Policy Statement, the entirety of the island is identified as being an Outstanding Natural Landscape.

Overall it is assessed that the terrestrial landscape values of Moturua Island are high, but that the modification associated with the coastal edge – the dwelling, accessory building, swimming pool and manicured gardens on the coastal flat adjoining the subject Site detracts from these values. This pocket of modification is spatially contained by the

⁵ LA4 Landscape Architects. *Far North Landscape Assessment*. 1995

rising landform to the south, and by the vegetated headlands to the west and east, and so its detracting effect is limited to a very defined area. It is assessed that the landscape values of the modified area are, in the opinion of the author, at most moderate.

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF NATURAL CHARACTER, AND LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

6.1 Background

Preceding sections describe the characteristics of the property and site, its setting and the proposal (including mitigation). The purpose of this section is to define the effects of the application upon the site and setting, to consider how the proposal would impact upon the experience of people viewing the development from outside of the site, and to comment upon the level of landscape, natural character, and visual effects.

Landscape change can, but does not necessarily result in adverse visual effects. Natural and human induced change is a constant within the landscape. The key is to manage this in such a way that any adverse visual effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

6.2 Assessment of Effects

The effects covered in this assessment, include those that can occur in relation to physical features, viewing audiences and visual amenity and/or on the site's contribution to the existing landscape character and amenity values.

Change in a landscape does not, of itself, necessarily constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect. Landscape is dynamic and is constantly changing over time in both subtle and more dramatic transformational ways, these changes are both natural and human induced.

6.2.1 Landscape and natural character: Biophysical – Abiotic attributes

Abiotic attributes include the landform, its geology, and hydrology.

Construction of the proposed dwelling will require earthworks over a relatively small area to create a low benched platform. The earthworks volume will be 102.23m³ of cut and 58.65m³ of fill. The change in the existing landform will be very small, and given the limited volume of earthworks, it is considered that the proposal will only result in a small change in the abiotic attributes of the landscape.

6.2.2 Landscape and natural character: Biophysical – Biotic attributes

Biotic attributes are the living organisms which shape an ecosystem

The proposal will require the clearance of an area of some 360m² of young regenerating native shrubland. This vegetation is less than 10 years old, and forms part of an extensive area of coastal forest that covers much of the balance of the island.

In addition, the vegetation is situated on the interface between the modified garden areas associated with the existing settlement, and the natural continuous forest. Due to the limited area of clearance proposed, the low value (due to its 'youth'), and the extent of the native forest that will be retained, it is considered that the degree of change will be very small.

6.2.3 Landscape and natural character: Experiential attributes

Experiential attributes comprise the interpretation of human experience of the landscape. This includes visible changes in the character of the landscape – its naturalness as well as its sense of wildness and remoteness including effects on natural darkness of the night sky.

The visual catchment of the Site has been described in section 3.3 of this report. The visual catchment from land based locations is very limited, these being restricted to locations on the beach (refer to [photos 1, 7 and 8](#)), and specifically perpendicular to the building site. Visitors to the beach are transitory individuals, but have a sensitivity which will be enhanced by the naturalness and aesthetic values of the island. They will however, be aware of the proximity and presence of existing buildings, including dwellings, as well as the nearby jetty. The sensitivity of these individuals is therefore gauged as being low to moderate.

When viewed from these locations there will be the potential to gain views of the proposed building, but these will be ‘filtered’ through the swathe of back-beach vegetation. The proposed building will be finished in dark, natural and recessive colours, and will be hard to discern through the shadows and complexity of the existing vegetation.

The proposed building will not be visible when viewed from oblique locations along the beach.

[Photos 3, 6, 9 and 10](#) illustrate views from the CMA. Such views will be available to a small number of individuals (being occupants of private boats, or tourist vessels travelling through the Te Rāwhiti Inlet. Being transitory, but engaged in the appreciation of the natural environment, the sensitivity of these individuals is gauged as being low to moderate.

Experienced from locations on the water less than 100m from, and perpendicular to the proposed building site, the change has the potential to be apparent, but only visible through a filter of vegetation. For other individuals on the water, the proposed building will not be visible.

Given the degree of integration afforded by the existing vegetation, and small scale of the proposed building, and its dark and natural colouring, it is considered that the change in the experiential values will be small. The proposal will not result in any perceptible change in the naturalness of the beach, nor in the ‘secluded’ character of this portion of the beach.

6.2.4 Summary of Natural Character Effects

As discussed above, the back-beach areas, occupied by a number of buildings, which are set within garden area display a lower level of natural character than does the wider context. The presence of this defined area of lower natural character diminishes the sensitivity of the CMA where it adjoins this modified area. The HNCA overlays the proposed building site, even though the proposed site – in part – occupies a modified area of mown grass, orchard trees and (now felled) exotic trees.

These localised existing modifications detract from the natural character of the immediate area of the proposed building. Notwithstanding this, it is the opinion of the author that the proposal will not affect the biotic and abiotic attributes of the landscape to any more than a very slight degree, and the change in experiential attributes will be at most low. It is the opinion of the author that the potential adverse natural character effect generated by the proposal will be low, and will not adversely affect the values that underpin the HNCA.

6.2.5 Landscape: Social, cultural and associative attributes

Social, cultural and associative values are linked with individual's relationship with the landscape, their memories, the way they interact with and use the landscape and the historical evidence of that relationship.

The subject Site is situated within one of a series of sheltered embayments encountered when travelling along this portion of the coast. The Site reflects the values and character of those convoluted sections of the Northland coastline, which are characterised by jutting headlands, rock shelves and sheltered embayments and coastal forest / shrubland. These landscapes and seascapes are perceived as highly attractive and are valued for their visual and endemic attributes. The subject Site, and its associated dwellings and manicured gardens display a 'private' character rather than imparting the character of a publicly accessible beach and back-beach area. This character is accepted as such by the community. The visibility of the proposed building will be moderated by the existing swathe of native coastal vegetation and will not detract from the social attributes of the landscape.

Other than the broad associative attributes that are linked to the wider Northland coastline and apart from the nearby pā sites (which are not affected by the proposal), the author is not aware of any specific associations linked to the subject Site.

Turning to cultural attributes, the archaeological authority has been granted following consultation with Patukeha Resource Management Unit and members of Ngāti Kuta Hapū.

Overall, the change with respect to the social, cultural and associative attributes will be small.

6.2.6 Summary of Landscape Effects

The landscape and seascape of the wider landscape context of the subject Site retains a high landscape value. The back-beach area which forms context to the south west of the proposed building site has been modified by the construction of built development and the establishment of a manicured garden. This has resulted in a diminishing of the landscape values such that the back-beach area. This area of lower landscape value reduces the sensitivity (to change) of that area of the CMA which it adjoins.

The proposal will result in no more than a slight change to the biotic and abiotic attributes of the landscape, the change in the experiential attributes will be very small, and confined to an area of the beach and CMA immediately perpendicular to the building site, and a small and acceptable change in the social, cultural and associative attributes.

It is the opinion of the author that the proposal generate a very low level of potential adverse landscape effect and will not adversely affect the values that underpin the ONL.

6.2.7 Visual amenity effects

The change in the experiential attributes of the Site have been discussed previously, and the potentially affected individuals identified. As previously noted, the proposal will be integrated into its setting and will not form a prominent element within the outlook from any of the potential receptors.

It is the opinion of the author that the potential adverse visual amenity effect will be (at most) very low.

7.0 EFFECTS ON STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

With regards to the effects on Policy 13 of the NZCPS, it is considered that the proposal will affect this natural character policy to a low degree, due in combination to the small scale of the activity and the measures taken to avoid significant effects.

When considering the landscape values of a terrestrial and marine landscape at a fine grain, the values, and consequently the sensitivity of the ONL are spatially variable. To the south west of the Site, the existing built form and manicured gardens contained within the back-beach area have diminished the sensitivity of the landscape. With the proposed building site being forming a part of this modified area, albeit close to the edge, it is considered that the proposal will not detract from the landscape values of the ONL and is therefore consistent with Policy 15.

As recommended by policy 4.5.2 of the RPS, the precise extent of the ONL and HNCA have been tested and it is confirmed that the terrestrial landscape values of Moturua Island are high, despite the localised modifications associated with the coastal edge – the dwellings, accessory buildings, and manicured gardens on the coastal back-beach to the south west of the subject Site which detract from these values.

It is the opinion of the author that – given the existing modification associated with the building area, and the small scale and recessive colouring of the proposed building – it will not compromise, or adversely affect the values of the terrestrial ONL or HNCA. Further, it is considered that the proposal will not create adverse effects to the values that underpin the HNCA and ONL and the values that apply to the CMA on the coastal waters where it adjoins the ONL. The proposal will avoid any adverse effects on the wider ONL, and the CMA where it adjoins the ONL. Therefore, the proposal is considered consistent with Policy 15 of the NZCPS.

As a consequence of meeting these NZCPS policies, it is considered that the proposal is appropriate use and development on this landscape and would therefore meet the relevant RPS and PRP objectives and policies concerning the protection of outstanding natural landscapes in the coastal environment.

In the same vein, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the relevant assessment criteria contained in the Operative District Plan. The proposed building will be sensitively located within its vegetative setting and measures are proposed to address fire safety. The scale and colouring of the building will ensure that it is well integrated into its setting such that it will not detract from the landscape, natural character, and visual values of the site and coast.

8.0 CONCLUSION

Simon Cocker Landscape Architecture has been engaged by the Moturua properties Ltd, to undertake a landscape assessment for a resource consent to undertake vegetation clearance, earthworks and to construct a dwelling on the coastal edge within Lot 2 DP 57873 Moturua Island.

The island displays elevated landscape and natural character values, and this is reflected in its overlays in the statutory documents.

The proposed building will be integrated into its setting, and will be of a small scale and recessive and natural colouring. Some limited earthworks, and vegetation clearance will be required, but the building will be largely screened from the beach and CMA.

The back-beach area to the south west of the building site contains dwellings, accessory buildings, and manicured gardens. This modification detracts from the landscape and natural character values locally and diminishes the sensitivity of the CMA where it adjoins this modified area.

It is the opinion of the author that the proposal will not compromise, or adversely affect the values of the terrestrial ONL or HNCA. Further, it is considered that the proposal will not create adverse effects to the values that underpin the HNCA and ONL and the values that apply to the CMA on the coastal waters where it adjoins the ONL. The proposal will avoid any adverse effects on the wider ONL, and the CMA where it adjoins the ONL. Therefore, the proposal is considered consistent with Policy 15 of the NZCPS.

It is the opinion of the author that the landscape effect of the proposal will be very low (less than minor), the potential adverse effect on natural character will be very low (less than minor). The potential adverse visual amenity effect of the proposal (experiential attributes) will be, at most, low (less than minor).

Simon Cocker

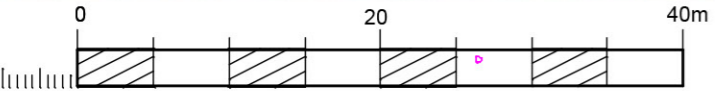


APPENDIX 1: Figures



Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling
 Landscape assessment
 FIGURE 2a: The Proposal

Local Authority: Far North District Council
 Total Area: 4.5805ha
 Comprised in: NA12C/1495
 Levels in terms of: One Tree Point Datum
 Contour interval is: 1.0m minor 5.0m Major
 THIS DRAWING AND DESIGN REMAINS THE PROPERTY OF WILLIAMS & KING AND MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF WILLIAMS & KING



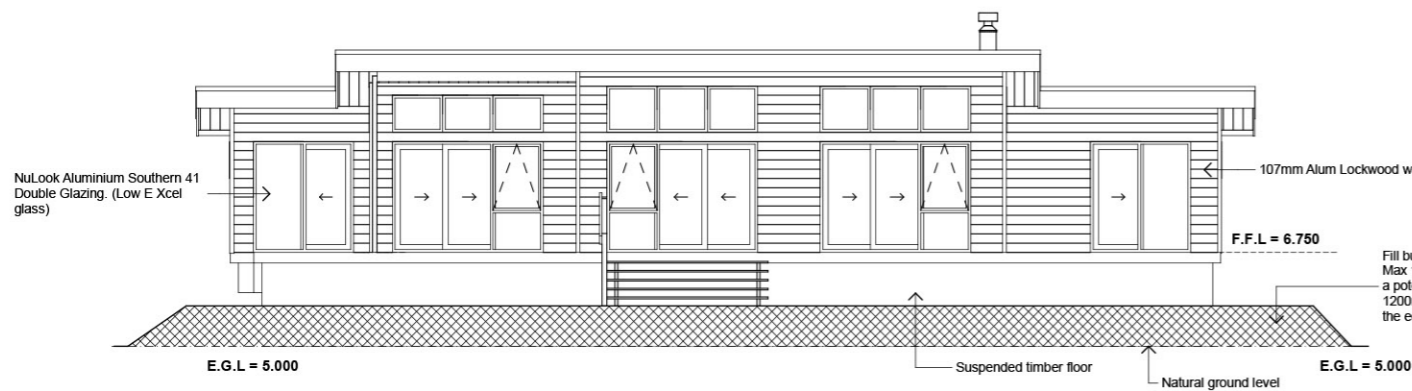
Proposed house site location

WILLIAMS AND KING
 Registered Land Surveyors, Planners &
 Land Development Consultants
 Ph: (09) 407 6030 27 Hobson Ave
 Email: kerikeri@saps.co.nz PO Box 937 Kerikeri

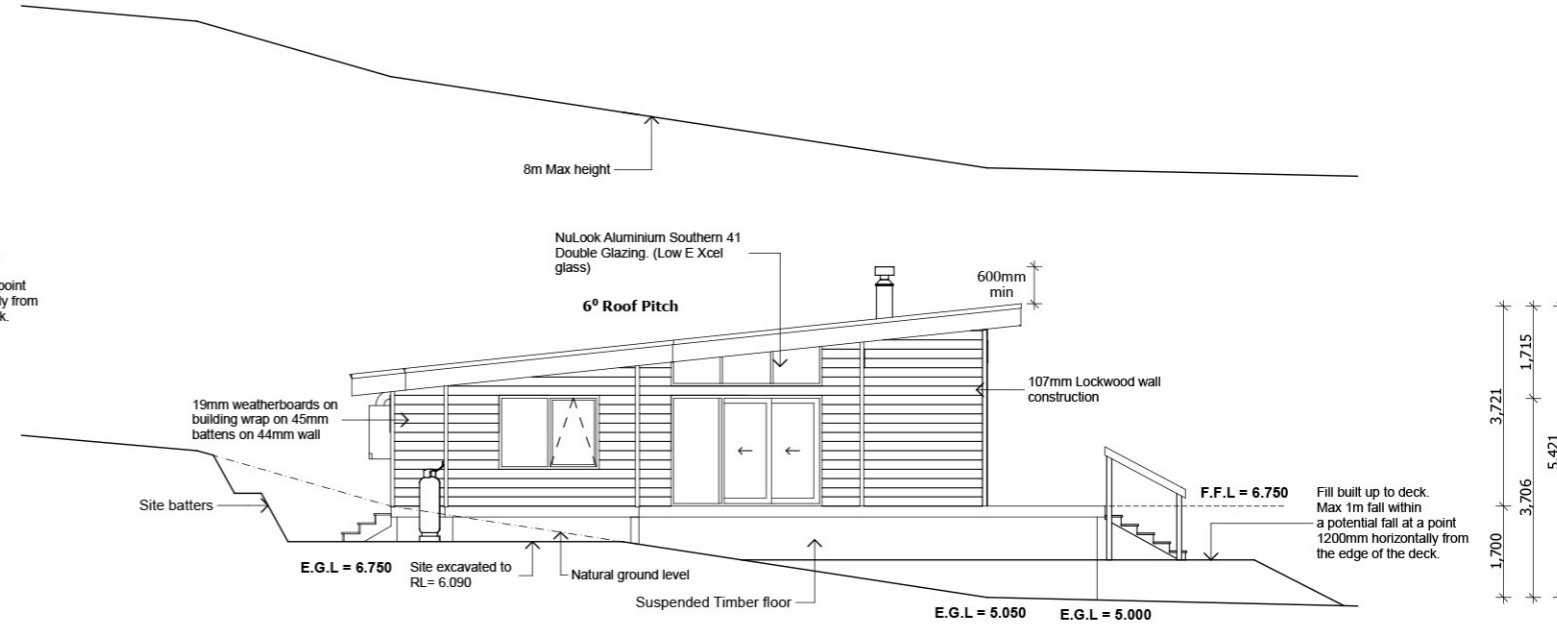
SITE PLAN - -LOT 2 DP 57873
MOTURUA ISLAND

Rev	Name	Date	SCALE	SHEET SIZE
Survey			1:500	A3
Design				
Drawn	W & K	Aug2024		

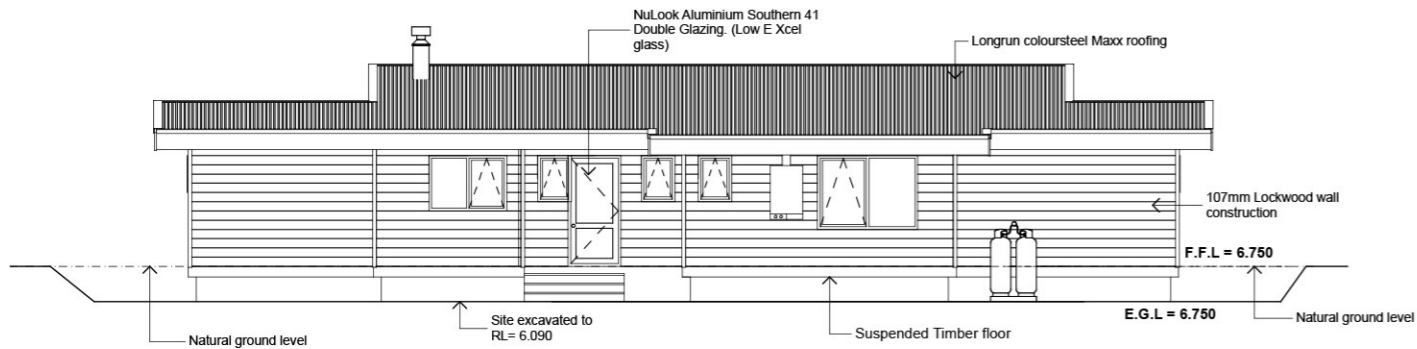
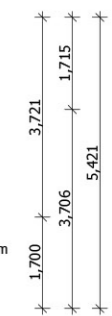
24422



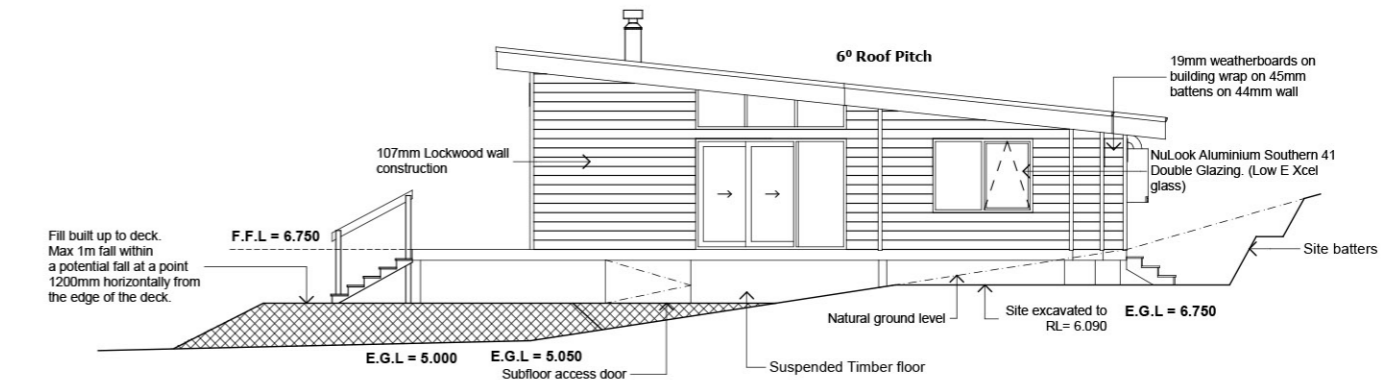
ELEVATION A (South East)
PROPOSED



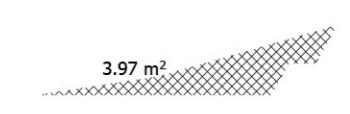
ELEVATION B (South West)
PROPOSED



ELEVATION C (North West)
PROPOSED



ELEVATION D (North East)
PROPOSED



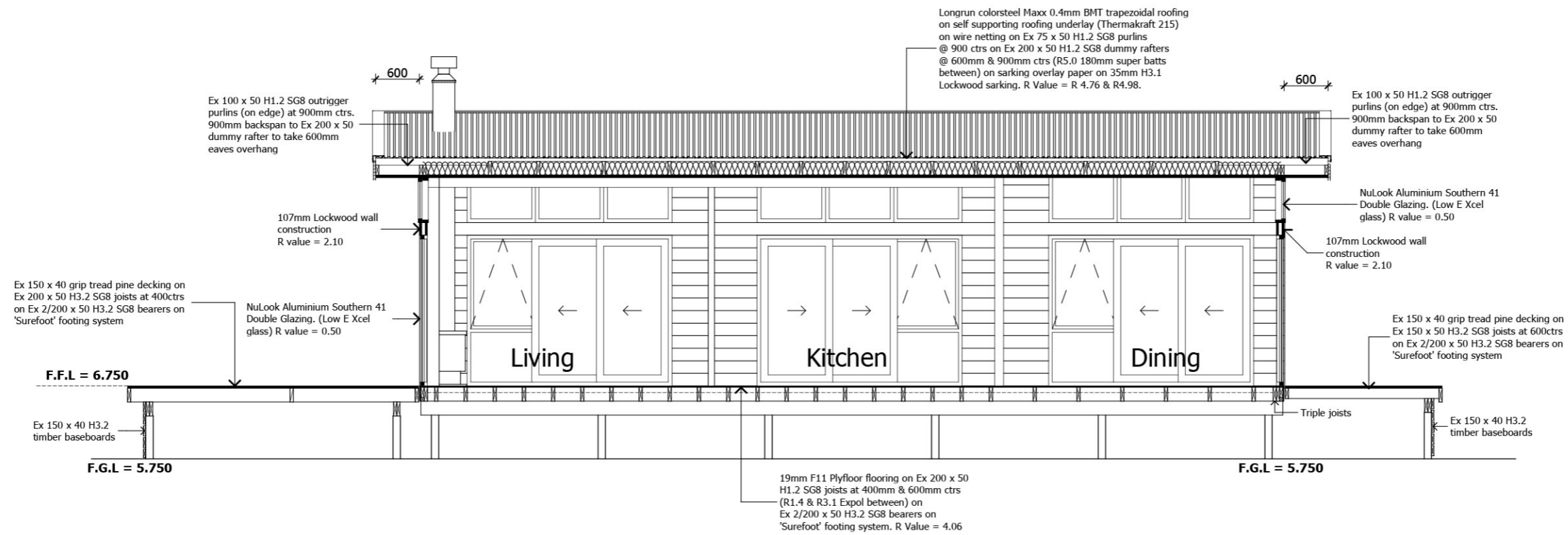
107mm wall - NuLook Southern41 Themally Broken, LowE Xcel glass (All Keylocks to be keyed alike)



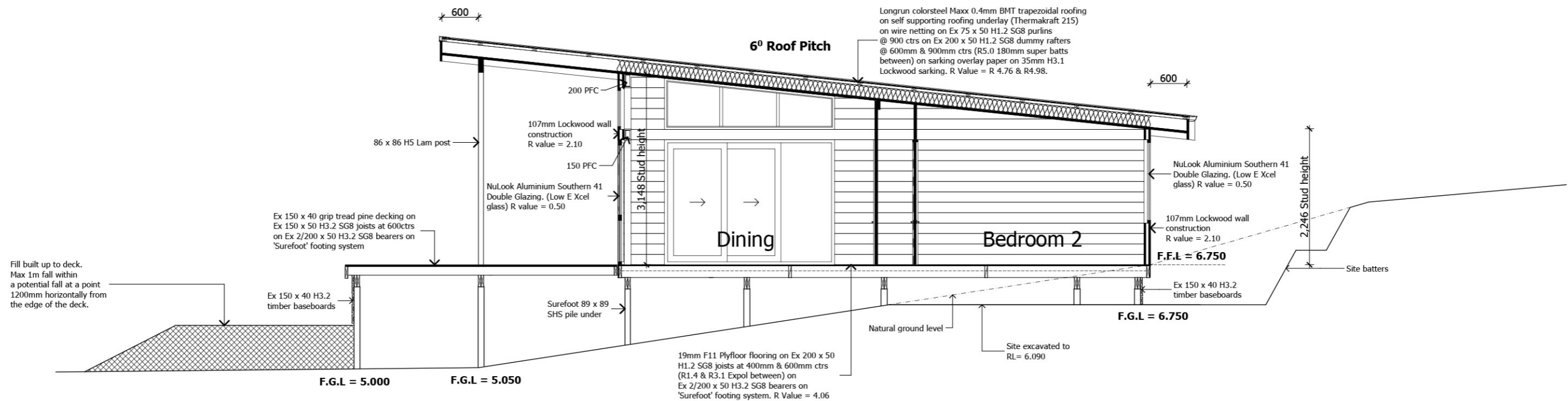
Joinery Schedule

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling
Landscape assessment
FIGURE 2b: The Proposal

<p>LOCKWOOD Designed for good</p>	<p>Absolute DESIGN 31A Rutland Street Rotorua Telephone: 07-349 1635 Mobile: 021 286 2631 Email: margotmcclaghlin77@gmail.com</p>	DRAWING TYPE: Elevations & Joinery Schedule	CLIENT: T B Goodfellow	Address Lot 2, DP 57873 Hahangarua Bay Moturua Island Bay of Islands Northland	REVISIONS: 05/08/2024 - Surefoot Foundation System added to plans shown as clouded 12/08/2024 - Total Earthworks added to sheet 2 as clouded 22/08/2024 - Site plan & wastewater updated as clouded	DATE ISSUED: Tuesday, 27 August 2024	FLOOR AREA: Area: 141.39m ²	SHEET: 6 / 23
		HOUSE TYPE: Modified Phoenix	CONTRACTOR: Lockwood Group Ltd		TIME ISSUED: 3:16 pm	SCALE: 1:100, 1:85 @ A2	JOB NO: 2403	

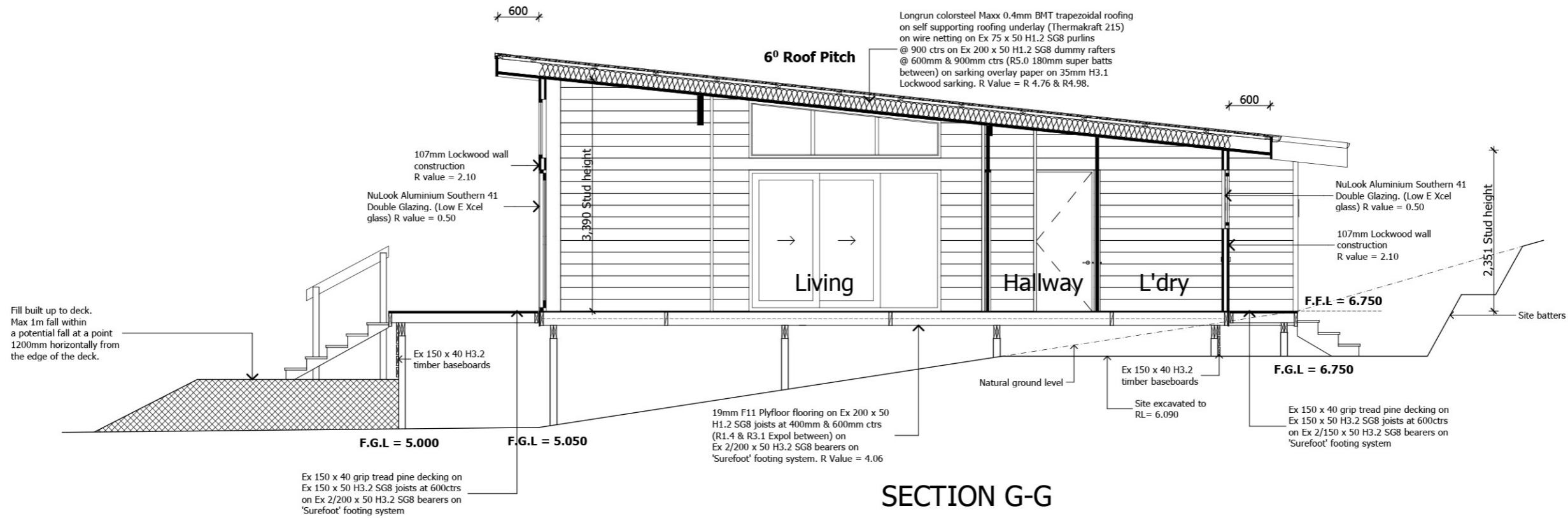


SECTION E-E

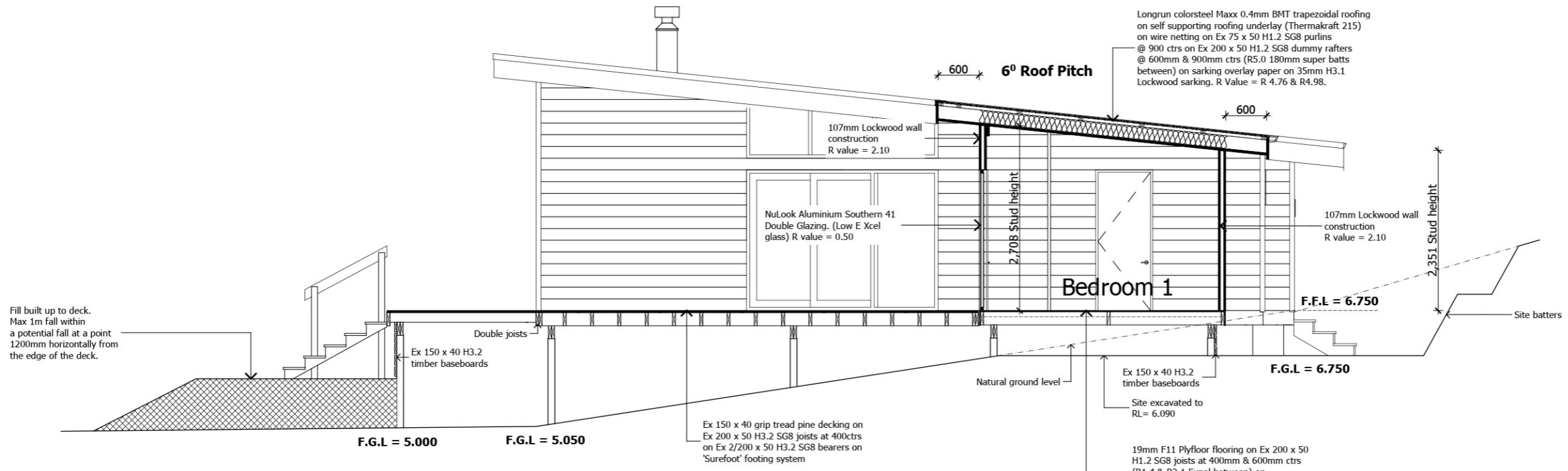


SECTION F-F

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling
 Landscape assessment
 FIGURE 2c: The Proposal



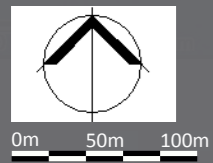
SECTION G-G



SECTION H-H

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling
 Landscape assessment
 FIGURE 2d: The Proposal

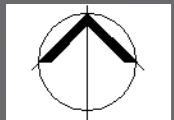
<p>LOCKWOOD Designed for good</p>	<p>Absolute DESIGN 31A Rutland Street Rotorua Telephone: 07-349 1635 Mobile: 021 286 2631 Email: margotmclaughin77@gmail.com</p>	DRAWING TYPE: Section G-G & H-H	CLIENT: T B Goodfellow	Address Lot 2, DP 57873 Hahangarua Bay Moturua Island Bay of Islands Northland	REVISIONS: 05/08/2024 - Surefoot Foundation System added to plans shown as clouded 12/08/2024 - Total Earthworks added to sheet 2 as clouded 22/08/2024 - Site plan & wastewater updated as clouded	DATE ISSUED: Tuesday, 27 August 2024 3:16 pm MM	FLOOR AREA: Area: 141.39m ² SCALE: 1:50 @ A2 JOB NO: 2403	SHEET: 8 / 23
		HOUSE TYPE: Modified Phoenix	CONTRACTOR: Lockwood Group Ltd					



Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling
Landscape assessment

FIGURE 3: The site and its context





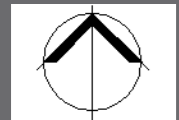
NTS

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling
Landscape assessment

FIGURE 4a: Identified Landscape and natural character values (Operative District Plan)



Simon Cocker
Landscape Architecture

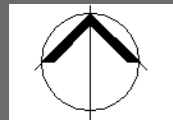


NTS

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling
Landscape assessment

FIGURE 4b: Identified Landscape and natural character values (Regional Policy Statement)





NTS

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling
Landscape assessment

FIGURE 4c: Identified Landscape and natural character values (Regional Policy Statement - detailed area)





Proposed building

Photo 1: View to building site from beach 1 (proposed building partially screened by existing vegetation)

Photo date: 15 August 2024

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling

Photos taken with digital equivalent of 50mm focal length unless otherwise specified.
Photos represent a 124° horizontal and 55° vertical field of view, and should be read at a distant of 400mm



Photo 2: Proposed building site, and regenerating shrubland

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling

Photos taken with digital equivalent of 50mm focal length unless otherwise specified.
Photos represent a 124° horizontal and 55° vertical field of view, and should be read at a distant of 400mm

Photo date: 15 August 2024



Ex. main residence

Ex. Lockwood

Proposed building

Photo 3: View to Site from CMA within Hahangarua Bay

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling

Photos taken with digital equivalent of 50mm focal length unless otherwise specified. Photos represent a 124° horizontal and 55° vertical field of view, and should be read at a distant of 400mm

Photo date: 15 August 2024





Photo 4: View north to existing cottage

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling

Photos taken with digital equivalent of 50mm focal length unless otherwise specified.
Photos represent a 124° horizontal and 55° vertical field of view, and should be read at a distant of 400mm

Photo date: 15 August 2024



Photo 5: Existing Lockwood (red-roofed) building

Photo date: 15 August 2024

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling

Photos taken with digital equivalent of 50mm focal length unless otherwise specified.
Photos represent a 124° horizontal and 55° vertical field of view, and should be read at a distant of 400mm



Ex. Lockwood

Proposed building

Photo 6: View to Site from CMA within Hahangarua Bay

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling

Photos taken with digital equivalent of 50mm focal length unless otherwise specified.
Photos represent a 124° horizontal and 55° vertical field of view, and should be read at a distant of 400mm

Photo date: 15 August 2024



Photo 7: View to building site from beach 3 (proposed building partially screened by existing vegetation)

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling

Photos taken with digital equivalent of 50mm focal length unless otherwise specified.
Photos represent a 124° horizontal and 55° vertical field of view, and should be read at a distant of 400mm

Photo date: 15 August 2024



Photo 8: View to building site from beach 6 (proposed building partially screened by existing vegetation)

Photo date: 15 August 2024

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling

Photos taken with digital equivalent of 50mm focal length unless otherwise specified.
Photos represent a 124° horizontal and 55° vertical field of view, and should be read at a distant of 400mm

Proposed building



Photo 9: View to Site from CMA

Photo date: 15 August 2024

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling

Photos taken with digital equivalent of 50mm focal length unless otherwise specified.
Photos represent a 124° horizontal and 55° vertical field of view, and should be read at a distant of 400mm



Ex. Lockwood

Proposed building

Photo 10: View to Site from CMA

Moturua Properties Ltd: Proposed new dwelling

Photos taken with digital equivalent of 50mm focal length unless otherwise specified. Photos represent a 124° horizontal and 55° vertical field of view, and should be read at a distant of 400mm

Photo date: 15 August 2024

APPENDIX 2: Assessment Methodology

Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment Methodology

Introduction

The landscape and visual effects assessment process provides a framework for assessing and identifying the nature and level of likely effects that may result from a proposed development. Such effects can occur in relation to changes to physical elements, the existing character of the landscape and the experience of it. In addition, the landscape assessment method may include an iterative design development processes which includes stakeholder involvement. The outcome of any assessment approach should seek to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects. A separate assessment is required to assess changes in natural character in coastal areas and other waterbodies.

When undertaking landscape and visual effects assessments, it is important that a structured and consistent approach is used to ensure that findings are clear and objective. Judgement should always be based on skills and experience, and be supported by explicit evidence and reasoned argument.

While landscape and visual effects assessments are closely related, they form separate procedures. The assessment of the potential effect on the landscape forms the first step in this process and is carried out as an effect on an environmental resource (i.e. landscape elements, features and character). The assessment of visual effects considers how changes to the physical landscape affect the viewing audience. The types of effects can be summarised as follows:

Landscape effects:

Change in the physical landscape, which may change its characteristics or qualities.

Visual effects:

Change to views which may change the visual amenity experienced by people.

The policy context, existing landscape resource and locations from which a development or change is visible all inform the 'baseline' for landscape and visual effects assessments. To assess effects, the landscape must first be described, including an understanding of the key landscape characteristics and qualities. This process, known as landscape characterisation, is the basic tool for understanding landscape character and may involve subdividing the landscape into character areas or types. The condition of the landscape (i.e. the state of an individual area of landscape or landscape feature) should also be described alongside a judgement made on the value or importance of the potentially affected landscape.

This outline of the landscape and visual effects assessment methodology has been undertaken with reference to the Quality Planning Landscape Guidance Note¹ and its signposts to examples of best practice which include the UK guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment² and Te Tangi a te Manu³.

Assessing landscape effects requires an understanding of the nature of the landscape resource and the magnitude of change which results from a proposed development to determine the overall level of landscape effects.

Nature of the landscape resource

Assessing the nature of the landscape resource considers both the susceptibility of an area of landscape to change and the value of the landscape. This will vary upon the following factors:

- Physical elements such as topography / hydrology / soils / vegetation;
- Existing land use;
- The pattern and scale of the landscape;
- Visual enclosure / openness of views and distribution of the viewing audience;

¹ <http://www.qualityplanning.org.nz/index.php/planning-tools/land/landscape>

² Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)

³ Te Tangi a te Manu (Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Guidelines), NZILA July 2022.

- The zoning of the land and its associated anticipated level of development;
- The value or importance placed on the landscape, particularly those confirmed in statutory documents; and
- The scope for mitigation, appropriate to the existing landscape.

The susceptibility to change takes account of both the attributes of the receiving environment and the characteristics of the proposed development. It considers the ability of a specific type of change occurring without generating adverse effects and/or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

Landscape value derives from the importance that people and communities, including tangata whenua, attach to particular landscapes and landscape attributes. This may include the classification of Outstanding Natural Landscape (RMA s.6(b)) based on important biophysical, sensory/ aesthetic and associative landscape attributes, which have potential to be affected by a proposed development.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

The magnitude of landscape change judges the amount of change that is likely to occur to existing areas of landscape, landscape features, or key landscape attributes. In undertaking this assessment, it is important that the size or scale of the change is considered within the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration of change, including whether the change is reversible. In some situations, the loss /change or enhancement to existing landscape elements such as vegetation or earthworks should also be quantified.

When assessing the level of landscape effects, it is important to be clear about what factors have been considered when making professional judgements. This can include consideration of any benefits which result from a proposed development. Table 1 below helps to explain this process. The tabulating of effects is only intended to inform overall judgements.

Contributing factors		Higher	Lower
Nature of Landscape Resource	Susceptibility to change	The landscape context has limited existing landscape detractors which make it highly vulnerable to the type of change which would result from the proposed development.	The landscape context has many detractors and can easily accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences to landscape character.
	The value of the landscape	The landscape includes important biophysical, sensory and associative attributes. The landscape requires protection as a matter of national importance (ONF/L).	The landscape lacks any important biophysical, sensory or associative attributes. The landscape is of low or local importance.
Magnitude of Change	Size or scale	Total loss or addition of key features or elements. Major changes in the key characteristics of the landscape, including significant aesthetic or perceptual elements.	The majority of key features or elements are retained. Key characteristics of the landscape remain intact with limited aesthetic or perceptual change apparent.
	Geographical extent	Wider landscape scale.	Site scale, immediate setting.
	Duration and reversibility	Permanent. Long term (over 10 years).	Reversible. Short Term (0-5 years).

Table 1: Determining the level of landscape effects

Visual Effects

To assess the visual effects of a proposed development on a landscape, a visual baseline must first be defined. The visual 'baseline' forms a technical exercise which identifies the area where the development may be visible, the potential viewing audience, and the key representative public viewpoints from which visual effects are assessed.

The viewing audience comprises the individuals or groups of people occupying or using the properties, roads, footpaths and public open spaces that lie within the visual envelope or 'zone of visual influence' of the site and proposal. Where

possible, computer modelling can assist to determine the theoretical extent of visibility together with field work undertaken to confirm this. Where appropriate, key representative viewpoints should be agreed with the relevant local authority.

Nature of the viewing audience

The nature of the viewing audience is assessed in terms of the susceptibility of the viewing audience to change and the value attached to views. The susceptibility of the viewing audience is determined by assessing the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations and the extent to which their interest or activity may be focused on views of the surrounding landscape. This relies on a landscape architect's judgement in respect of visual amenity and reaction of people who may be affected by a proposal. This should also recognise that people more susceptible to change generally include: residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views; visitors to heritage assets or other important visitor attractions; and communities where views contribute to the landscape setting.

The value or importance attached to particular views may be determined with respect to its popularity or numbers of people affected or reference to planning instruments such as viewshafts or view corridors.

Important viewpoints are also likely to appear in guide books or tourist maps and may include facilities provided for its enjoyment. There may also be references to this in literature or art, which also acknowledge a level of recognition and importance.

Magnitude of Visual Change

The assessment of visual effects also considers the potential magnitude of change which will result from views of a proposed development. This takes account of the size or scale of the effect, the geographical extent of views and the duration of visual change which may distinguish between temporary (often associated with construction) and permanent effects where relevant. Preparation of any simulations of visual change to assist this process should be guided by best practice as identified by the NZILA⁴.

When determining the overall level of visual effect, the nature of the viewing audience is considered together with the magnitude of change resulting from the proposed development. Table 2 has been prepared to help guide this process:

Contributing factors		Higher	Lower
Nature of Landscape Resource	Susceptibility to change	Views from dwellings and recreation areas where attention is typically focussed on the landscape..	Views from places of employment and other places where the focus is typically incidental to its landscape context. Views from transport corridors.
	The value of the landscape	Viewpoint is recognised by the community such as an important view shaft, identification on tourist maps or in art and literature. High visitor numbers.	Viewpoint is not typically recognised or valued by the community. Infrequent visitor numbers..
Magnitude of Change	Size or scale	Loss or addition of key features in the view. High degree of contrast with existing landscape elements (i.e. in terms of form scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture). Full view of the proposed development	Most key features of view retained. Low degree of contrast with existing landscape elements (i.e. in terms of form scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture). Glimpse / no view of the proposed development.
	Geographical extent	Front on views. Near distance views; Change visible across a wide area.	Oblique views. Long distance views. Small portion of change visible.
	Duration and reversibility	Permanent. Long term (over 15 years).	Transient / temporary. Short Term (0-5 years).

Nature of Effects

⁴ Best Practice Guide: Visual Simulations BPG 10.2, NZILA

In combination with assessing the level of effects, the landscape and visual effects assessment also considers the nature of effects in terms of whether this will be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in the context within which it occurs. Neutral effects can also occur where landscape or visual change is benign.

It should also be noted that a change in a landscape does not, of itself, necessarily constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect. Landscape is dynamic and is constantly changing over time in both subtle and more dramatic transformational ways, these changes are both natural and human induced. What is important in managing landscape change is that adverse effects are avoided or sufficiently mitigated to ameliorate the effects of the change in land use. The aim is to provide a high amenity environment through appropriate design outcomes.

This assessment of the nature effects can be further guided by Table 3 set out below:

Nature of effect	Use and definition
Adverse (negative):	The proposed development would be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform which results in a reduction in landscape and / or visual amenity values
Neutral (benign):	The proposed development would complement (or blend in with) the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape maintaining existing landscape and / or visual amenity values
Beneficial (positive):	The proposed development would enhance the landscape and / or visual amenity through removal of restoration of existing degraded landscapes uses and / or addition of positive elements or features

Table 3: Determining the Nature of Effects

Cumulative Effects

During the scoping of an assessment, where appropriate, agreement should be reached with the relevant local authority as to the nature of cumulative effects to be assessed. This can include effects of the same type of development (e.g. wind farms) or the combined effect of all past, present and approved future development⁵ of varying types, taking account of both the permitted baseline and receiving environment. Cumulative effects can also be positive, negative or benign.

Cumulative Landscape Effects

Cumulative landscape effects can include additional or combined changes in components of the landscape and changes in the overall landscape character. The extent within which cumulative landscape effects are assessed can cover the entire landscape character area within which the proposal is located, or alternatively, the zone of visual influence from which the proposal can be observed.

Cumulative Visual Effects

Cumulative visual effects can occur in combination (seen together in the same view), in succession (where the observer needs to turn their head) or sequentially (with a time lapse between instances where proposals are visible when moving through a landscape). Further visualisations may be required to indicate the change in view compared with the appearance of the project on its own.

Determining the nature and level of cumulative landscape and visual effects should adopt the same approach as the project assessment in describing both the nature of the viewing audience and magnitude of change leading to a final judgement. Mitigation may require broader consideration which may extend beyond the geographical extent of the project being assessed.

Determining the Overall Level of Effects

The landscape and visual effects assessment concludes with an overall assessment of the likely level of landscape and visual effects. This step also takes account of the nature of effects and the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation.

⁵ The life of the statutory planning document or unimplemented resource consents

This step informs an overall judgement identifying what level of effects are likely to be generated as indicated in Table 4 below. This table which can be used to guide the level of landscape and visual effects uses an adapted seven-point scale derived from Te Tangi a te Manu (Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Guidelines)

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

Table 4: Determining the overall level of landscape and visual effects

Determination of “minor”

Decision makers determining whether a resource consent application should be notified must also assess whether the effect on a person is less than minor⁶ or an adverse effect on the environment is no more than minor⁷. Likewise, when assessing a non-complying activity, consent can only be granted if the s104D ‘gateway test’ is satisfied. This test requires the decision maker to be assured that the adverse effects of the activity on the environment will be ‘minor’ or not be contrary to the objectives and policies of the relevant planning documents.

These assessments will generally involve a broader consideration of the effects of the activity, beyond the landscape and visual effects. Through this broader consideration, guidance may be sought on whether the likely effects on the landscape resource or effects on a person are considered in relation to ‘minor’. It must also be stressed that more than minor effects on individual elements or viewpoints does not necessarily equate to more than minor effects on the wider landscape resource. In relation to this assessment, moderate-low level effects would generally equate to ‘minor’.

⁶ RMA, Section 95E

⁷ RMA Section 95D

APPENDIX 3: Northland RPS Worksheet

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – ISLANDS OF THE BAY OF ISLANDS INCLUDING MOTUMARIE ISLAND, MOTUARAHU ISLAND BUT EXCLUDING MOTUROA ISLAND
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types <small>(refer to list overleaf)</small> Reefs and islands	A cluster of predominantly rocky coast islands, reefs & islets that is predominantly focused in the area between Rawhiti & Tapeka Point but with two outliers in the form of the islands situated immediately offshore of Paihia. Most of the islands have a moderately steep rolling relief with coastlines consisting of a mixture of steep rocky coastal flanks with fringing reefs or contained sandy embayments, defined typically by moderately pronounced headlands. The majority of these land bodies are less than 3 km ² in area, although Urupukapuka & Moturua Islands are noticeably larger than other islands.
Geology <small>(including geopreservation sites)</small>	Paleozoic – Mesozoic Waipapa Terrane greywacke
Soil Types	Marua light brown clay loam
Ecology <small>(including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)</small>	<p>Motumaire is possum free and is an important habitat for threatened and regionally significant bird species. Its kanuka dominant coastal forest is an example of a nationally rare vegetation type. Nearby Motuarahi is noted for the presence of threatened and regionally significant species.</p> <p>Motuarohia Island has 3 ecological types; pohutukawa-dominant, kanuka dominant, and a combination of both. It is cited as an example of a nationally rare vegetation type and a representative site for pohutukawa coastal forest. It is also important for the presence of threatened and regionally significant birds and the threatened Pacific gecko</p> <p>Moturua island group displays a diversity of bird life including several threatened bird species, two of which have been successfully introduced to Moturua Island. It hosts threatened and regionally significant plant species and a threatened snail species. Representative site for type (a) kanuka coastal forest. It also has areas of coastal shrubland.</p> <p>Motukiekie is predominantly covered in kanuka coastal forest. It is free of rodents and most of it has an overhead canopy, which would favour bird introductions.</p> <p>Okahu Island is noted for the presence of threatened and regionally significant bird species, with recent breeding records for northern New Zealand dotterel and variable oystercatcher. It is a representative site for kowharawhara–hangehange coastal association, harakeke–kowharawhara–pohutukawa coastal association, and kanuka–harakeke coastal association. Only record of the two initial types in the Ecological District. It contains an example of coastal forest, which is a nationally rare vegetation type, along with the presence of a threatened plant species</p> <p>Waewaetoria Island is noted as a representative site for pohutukawa coastal forest, which is also a nationally rare vegetation type. It also</p>

	<p>contains kanuka coastal forest. The island provides important habitat for threatened and regionally significant species.</p> <p>Urupukapuka Island and its surrounding small islets contain 4 ecological units: kanuka coastal forest, kanuka pohutukawa coastal forest, pohutukawa coastal forest, and exotic (primarily kikuyu) grassland. It is recorded as being an example of coastal forest, which is a nationally rare vegetation type and a representative site for the 3 forest types mentioned above. Urupukapuka Island is also a significant habitat for threatened and regionally significant plant and bird species.</p>
Archaeological sites	Islands contain a number of pa including Hikurangi, Haikai & an intensity of recorded sites of pre-European occupation & use, with these being particularly focused on the coastal margins. The islands also feature a number of post European arch sites.
Heritage Landscapes	Recorded site of anchorage by Captain Cook near Motarohi Island (Roberton Island) and old hospital site on Moturua. The islands have a long standing role as anchorages and early European utilisation related to mission activities. There are associative relationships to early parliament and whaling at Russell. Deep Water Cove and Urupukapuka have connections with the earliest deep sea gamefishing in NZ.
<p>Landscape characterisation (including the identification of any specific characteristics)</p> <p>The Bay of Islands is amongst New Zealand's most publicised & well known coastal landscapes, both in terms of tourism promotion & national identity.</p> <p>The islands' role as an outer "breakwater" to the inner Bay of Islands creates an area of generally sheltered water within which a multitude of small coves, beaches, channels & headlands offer a considerable diversity of spaces & areas of character. Arguably there is no other area in New Zealand that offers such complexity of coastal landscapes within such a small area. Repeated patterns of landform, vegetation cover, coastal profile, fringing reefs and islets, and similarly scaled embayments creates a strong sense of unity across these island groups (whilst noting that Motumarie and Moturahi are spatially disconnected from the main body of islands).</p> <p>As a cruising destination, the Bay of Islands is regarded as one of the best in New Zealand and internationally. It is also favoured for recreational day boating, fishing and summer camping in the DoC reserve on Urupukapuka. That island also features a private resort development. A proportion of the land area of the collective of islands is private, with the balance administered by the Department of Conservation. Most of the islands have a mix of those tenures present.</p> <p>The mainland from Cape Brett around to Tapeka Point is closely associated with the main body of the Bay of Islands, acting as a southern/eastern definition to the Bay. Whilst parts of that coast are considerably more developed, in general it shares much in common with the coast of the islands and therefore is experienced as having a rather similar character.</p> <p>A high measure of complexity, naturalness and limited evidence of human intervention is experienced in the strongly coastal context of the Bay of Islands, and these factors are pivotal in its identity.</p>	

EVALUATION		
Criteria	Rank	Comment
Natural Science Factors		
Representativeness Natural landscapes are clearly characteristic of the area, district or region. The key components of the landscape will be present in a way that defines the character of the place and distills its character and essence. Endemic associations.	5	The Bay of Islands is one of Northland's most distinctive and representative areas in terms of its geophysical characteristics and ecology. The scale of the respective islands, their coastal setting in close proximity to the Cape Brett peninsula with its extensive areas of forest and natural shoreline, and the terrestrial and marine ecology of the islands themselves are unique to this area.
Rarity Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.	5	An assemblage that is not replicated anywhere else in New Zealand.
Aesthetic Values		
Coherence The patterns of land cover and land use are largely in harmony with the underlying natural pattern of the landform of the area and there are no significant discordant elements of land cover or land use.	5	Repeated patterns of landform, orientation, coastal morphology & mixes of vegetation & relic pasture land lead to the islands being highly unified & identifiable as a coherent grouping. Their spatial arrangement and generally close proximity to each other further reinforces that consistency.
Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	5	Highly diverse by virtue of their existence as a cluster of variably sized islands, associated reefs, convoluted shoreline profiles, developing diversity & indigenous cover & connecting islets & reefs all contribute. Differing levels of coastal exposure, and the geomorphology and ecological responses to varied wave energy, are also an important contributing factor.
Vividness Natural features and landscape are widely recognized across the community and beyond the local area and remain clearly in the memory; striking landscapes are symbolic of an area due to their recognisable and memorable qualities.	5	Strongly memorable as the centerpiece of the wider Bay of Islands area (that includes Opuia, Paihia, Waitangi and Russell), strongly promoted & recognised as both a tourist mecca by recreational users & as part of New Zealand's broader identity.
Naturalness How affected by human activity is the landscape? Does human activity intrude on the landscape? Eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of buildings and associated built development. • Presence of infrastructure services. • Extent of indigenous forest cover. • Homogeneity of exotic vegetation. • Presence / extent of modified agricultural land use. • Strength of natural processes / ecological patterns. • Unmodified and legible physical relief and landform. • Presence of water. 	5	<p>Very limited settlement & that which is present tends to be focused in contained areas. Islands are typically either completely clothed in developing indigenous cover or rapidly advancing through phases of colonisation to that state. Planting efforts on some of the islands is assisting that process.</p> <p>A clear expression of coastal processes & very little interference with those forces through human intervention. Outer northeast faces of the "barrier" that includes Urupukapuka evidently more exposed to sea conditions than the sheltered southwestern embayments.</p> <p>The relationship with the sea that is so critical to the identity of this area is highly varied and responsive to wave exposure, tidal movement, deposition of sediment and a highly diverse collection of shorelines that represents most forms of shore other than ocean beach / dune associations and estuarine coast.</p> <p>Remaining past grazing land is undergoing a rapid transition to indigenous shrubland.</p>

<p>Intactness Natural systems are intact and aesthetically coherent and do not display significant visual signs of human modification, intervention or manipulation, visually intact and highly aesthetic natural landscapes.</p>	4	<p>Limited extent of human settlement & productive land use sees most of the islands in a relatively natural & evolving state. Areas of pasture & exotic tree cover appear to be in a process of transition towards native forest types.</p>
Experiential Values		
<p>Expressiveness The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.</p>	5	<p>Self evident as an inter-related cluster of islands, within a broader embayment, very distinctive & arguably unique.</p>
<p>Sensory qualities (These are landscape phenomena as directly perceived and experienced by humans, such as the view of a scenic landscape, or the distinctive smell and sound of the foreshore).</p>	5	<p>A very evocative part of New Zealand's coastline that is a strong draw for a considerable body of recreational boaters & tourist ventures alike.</p>
<p>Transient Values The consistent and repeated occurrence of transient features that contributes to the character, qualities and values of the landscape; landscapes are widely recognised for their transient features and the contribution that these make to the landscape.</p>	5	<p>Character of islands in related CMA highly responsive to light conditions & sea state. Clear water & white sand in many of the embayments makes these particularly vivid in the bright light conditions of summer when the area is most used.</p>
<p>Remoteness / Wildness Does the landscape display a wilderness character, remote from and untouched by human presence? Eg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of remoteness • Accessibility • Distance from built development 	4	<p>Whilst the islands are largely unsettled & separated somewhat from the mainland by moderate channels, there is a sense of relatedness to settled areas around Rawhiti, Parekura Bay etc. The few buildings & man-made facilities on the island groups are less challenging to wilderness. A seasonal peak of use through summer sees large numbers of recreational boat users in the area and the few low key camping areas well used. There is also a regular passage of vessels in adjacent channels. These uses are, however, clearly short term and impermanent, so do not have an enduring impact upon the sense of remoteness experienced in the area.</p>
<p>Shared and recognised values Natural features and landscape are widely known and valued by the immediate and wider community for their contribution to a sense of place leading to a strong community association with, or high public esteem for the place.</p>	5	<p>The intensive use of the area for recreational purposes & the widespread awareness of the islands as one of New Zealand's key maritime landscapes and through tourism, publicity, coffee table books and other media, demonstrate a high level of awareness and value amongst the wider community.</p>
<p>Spiritual, cultural and historical associations Natural features and landscapes can be clearly and widely known and influenced by their connection to the spiritual, cultural and historical valued in the place and includes associative meanings and associative activities valued by the community. These can include both activities and meanings associative meanings are spiritual, cultural or social associations with particular landscape elements, features, or areas, whilst associative activities are patterns of social activity that occur in particular parts of a landscape, for example, popular walking routes or fishing spots.</p>	5	<p>A strong record of historic use by Maori & Pakeha cultures & a legacy of recreational use particularly over the past century as transportation has improved and leisure time become more widely available. Includes many recorded sites of cultural & heritage importance.</p> <p>Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period.</p>

Rank scale between 1 (low) and 5 (high)

Land Types
Coastal cliffs / escarpment
Low escarpment
Bays and headlands
Beach
Dune complex
Reefs and islands

Estuarine / inlet
Open harbour
Coastal plain
Rolling hills
Steep hills; moderate to high relief
Ranges; high relief
Strongly rolling land
Low rolling land
Valley floors and flats
Plains
Volcanic cones
River mouth
Wetland
Watercourses
Lakes and water bodies

Photographs of unit









