

**BEFORE A HEARINGS PANEL
APPOINTED BY NELSON CITY COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER of Private Plan Change 28 – Maitahi Bayview

**AND IN THE MATTER of Clause 21 of the First Schedule of the Resource
Management Act 1991**

**EVIDENCE OF ANNE STEVEN FOR SAVE THE MAITAI INC
LANDSCAPE, AMENITY, NATURAL CHARACTER
DATED 28 JUNE 2022**

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INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Elizabeth Anne Steven. I am a Registered NZILA Landscape Architect with a sole landscape architectural practice in Wanaka.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Key acronyms and the annexures and attachments that form part of this evidence are addressed at paragraphs 49-51 below.

The Site

3. The Site description provided by Mr Milne is comprehensive but there are some information gaps. These relate to information around fauna on the Site and incomplete record of native flora. There is no information around the natural regeneration potential of the Site and its role in wider ecological restoration initiatives. The volcanic landforms including the “knobby knees” of lower Kākā Hill and the floodplain terrace are distinctive natural features. The separate small catchment on the south end of Malvern Hills ridge is contiguous and integral with Branford Park/Olive Hill. The former Ridgeline Track is noted as the only physical public access on the Site to date, at the discretion of the landowner. There are excellent views out from this route. Sharlands Hill mountain bike park tracks adjoin the Kākā Hill ridge boundary, also at the discretion of the landowner. There are formal overlays applicable to the Site: SNA166, Landscape Overlay on ridgelines, Conservation Priority 2 and 3 on Kākā Stream, and Riparian Overlay and Conservation Priority 1 on the Maitai River.

Landscape Context

4. The Site has two contextual relationships. First, with the Kākā Stream Valley as part of the lower Maitai Valley, an important access way into the interior and destination for a variety of high-quality recreational activities. Secondly, with the Maitai River as its central element; and the western side of the Malvern Hills overlooking and backdropping Nelson Haven and “capping” urban suburbs. Urban suburbs of Nelson on hills are characteristic but are at lower elevations than the Site land. Urban development on coastal plain and valley floors is characteristic of the Nelson area.
5. The lower Maitai Valley is highly valued for its open green space and quiet rural character providing the setting for recreational activities. The Malvern Hill ridge is valued as open green backdrop and setting for the urban areas. Both provide visual relief to the urban areas.
6. In my opinion, the Kākā Stream Valley as a whole is a Significant Landscape and Kākā Hill is a Significant Natural Feature. I agree with the backdrop and skyline areas

adopted in the Structure Plan but only insofar they recognise sensitive areas when viewed from the west.

Landscape Values

7. The identification of landscape values of the Site in context is comprehensive and there is a high level of agreement between me and RMM. These are largely set out in the BM Nelson Landscape Study.
8. I have summarised the values as specific features/elements and attributes in a table at the end of my section on landscape values. I agree with most of the RMM evaluation of the Site. I disagree that Kākā Valley has low associative value, considering it has Moderate value. Kākā Hill has Moderate-High rather than Moderate biophysical value in my opinion and Moderate associative value rather than Low to Moderate.
9. Overall, it is the open rural character of the landscape and especially its skylines and ridgelines and its riparian areas with an overwhelming dominance of landform and vegetation that underlies the most important values as set out in AP9.6 and AP9.7¹, as backdrop, greenbelt and gateway landscape. The Backdrop/Skyline areas do not represent the only parts of the Site that are significant.

Landscape Planning Context

10. Sections 6 and 7 RMA are applicable. The relevant planning documents that are directly relevant to my assessment are the RPS and the NRMP. In my opinion the NZCPS is also relevant because I consider part of the Site is within the coastal environment.

Visual Change

11. There are broadly two viewing contexts – the lower Maitai River Valley/Kākā Stream Valley including both direct intimate views on the boundary and broader elevated views from reserves and public roads adjoining or overlooking the Site, mainly from viewers partaking in recreational activities; and the seaward side of the Malvern Hills ridge viewed from urban areas, the coast, and SH6. The ridgeline/skyline of the Malvern Hills and Kākā Hill are common to both.
12. The LVAUD has covered a representative range of viewpoints with omissions from Sharlands Hill, Grampians reserves, and Maitai River reserve upstream of the Site (covered by Mr Milne in his EIC).

¹ Of the NRMP

13. The magnitude of visual change is generally Moderate to High in my opinion rather than generally Low to Moderate as assessed by RMM. The only views in which there would be a less than Moderate change are those from the central city which are mostly of the southwest end of the Malvern Hills ridge and Kākā Hill. Visual changes associated with the ecological improvements would be more subtle and consistent in visual character and therefore Low in magnitude.
14. There would potentially be some effects of built form on skylines as the Primary Skyline does not capture all areas that form skyline. There would also be built form effects on prominent ridgelines.
15. Visual effects of a protracted construction period over several years and the time taken for planted vegetation to mature need to be taken into account as do other more intermittent and transient effects such as fixed night lighting and vehicle/bicycle lights, glare and glint off hard surfaces and general residential clutter such as parked vehicles.
16. Tree cover off-Site reduces visual access into the Site's lower areas at present. Off-Site vegetation cannot be relied upon.

Effects on landscape character

17. It is inevitable that the landscape character of the Site would change overall, from rural/rural living to one expressing a mix of urban and rural/open space character. The degree of change would be High in my opinion. The least change would occur across the bulk of Kākā Hill and along the southwest ridgeline. Skylines and ridgelines would transform from simple open landform or vegetated ones to forms with a mix of variable vegetation and built form and roadway elements. There would also be the transient or intermittent changes in the way of lighting, traffic etc. which would be significantly more than associated with the 'potential development'.
18. The LVAUD describes the various ways the Site would change in character. I agree with some of the conclusions – increase in built form, Kākā Hill remains as green backdrop (mostly), reduction in perceptions of open space and green backdrop in other areas. I disagree the reduction in openness would be minor. It would inevitably be High in my view.
19. I do not agree that the development that would be enabled is consistent with existing urban patterns, as it would not be contained to the valley floor and lower slopes. Apart from the Port Hills ridge, which is lower, there are no other instances of urban development entirely covering a large ridge in Nelson.

Effects on natural character

20. I have reviewed Mr Milne's assessment of effects on natural character of riparian areas. I agree that with regard to the water features of the Site there is significant potential for enhancement of natural character. With regard to the wider Site the outcome would be dichotomous. Part of the Site (Kākā Hill, part of Kākā Stream Valley true right, and the southwest end of Malvern Hills) would potentially see an improvement in natural character. On the flipside, large parts of the Site would, however, see a marked reduction in natural character due to urban development. It would most likely become Very Low.

Landscape and visual amenity effects assessment with reference to statutory framework

21. A fundamental premise of the RMM assessment is that the Site has already been "tagged" for urban development providing landscape values are maintained or enhanced, appearing to assume a level of urban development is anticipated. In my view the fact the Kākā Valley has been "tagged" for urban expansion has no bearing on the outcome of a LVA assessment. Rather it is the LVA assessment that will contribute the necessary information to decide if urban expansion of the nature proposed through PPC28 is appropriate. I have identified key themes related to landscape matters in the applicable planning instruments which provide a framework for assessment.

Preservation and Enhancement of Distinctive Setting for Nelson

22. Some aspects of PPC28 would contribute positively to Nelson's character and valued setting. These are the ecological and natural character enhancements of Kākā Hill, and Kākā Stream and Maitai River riparian corridors and retention of most of the southwest end of Malvern Hills in open space.
23. At a fundamental level however the conversion of open undeveloped hillsides and ridgeline/skyline to urban residential character would not sustain what is distinctive and important to Nelson. I disagree that the urban development would be seen as infill and logical extension of existing urban development for reasons given earlier. The development proposed as a whole would not reflect and express the unique identity of Nelson in my opinion.

Visual Amenity Effects

24. The Site landscape is highly valued for its visual and open space amenity in close proximity to Nelson city. I have reviewed the RMM assessment of effects on visual amenity which I have set out in a table in my evidence. Overall, in my opinion, despite the high level of agreement on landscape values the RMM assessment has understated the degree of adverse effect on visual amenity. This is primarily because the RMM

assessment concludes there would be no more than a Low to Moderate degree of adverse effect despite the large-scale transformation of open rural landscape to built-up urban landscape including in sensitive backdrop and skyline areas. This view has been coloured by the assumption the Site has already been “tagged” for urban development and that the expansion would be considered logical and consistent with existing patterns of urban development. I consider that adverse effects on visual amenity would be Moderate to High in degree where there would be more open views of the development on the Site.

Skyline/Backdrop Areas

25. Particular regard is to be had to the sensitivity of the Backdrop and Skyline areas and to protecting the amenity they provide.
26. Notwithstanding the provisions for managing skyline effects, not all areas that form skyline on the Malvern Hills are identified so there would potentially still be some uncontrolled skyline effects caused by built form on the skyline. The Backdrop areas mapped in the structure plan do not include all the sensitive upper slope area as viewed from places in the Maitai River Valley areas. Whilst the broad form of the ridge would be maintained its open green character would not be except at the southwest end. The Backdrop and Skyline areas on Kākā Hill would be protected.

Seaward Facing Slopes

27. There would be an adverse effect on the visual amenity of the seaward facing slopes to a High degree.

Loss of Public Views from Ridgelines

28. No public views from the Site would be lost as there is no public access to the Site. There is potential for buildings and plantings to obstruct views out from the Malvern Hills ridgeline proposed shared path and also from the proposed lower-level walkway. A broad swathe of open space around these routes would best protect these views.

Views from Main Transport Corridors

29. There would be no loss of views but degradation of some views from SH6 and the Maitai Valley Road would be an outcome.

Significant Views

30. There would not be loss or degradation with respect to the significant views scheduled in Table 9.1 of the NRMP.

Gateway Landscapes

31. The lower Maitai Valley is a gateway landscape. the proposed urban expansion would detract from this landscape and undermine its function.

Significant Landscape

32. The Significant Landscape of the Maitai River Valley is not mapped as an overlay on the structure plan as the Backdrop and Skyline areas are and there are no bespoke provisions for it. It is inevitable that the development enabled by PPC28 would not maintain or protect the core values of this landscape as they centre around open, green undeveloped (in an urban sense) rural landscape and rural peace and quiet.

Significant Natural Features

33. There are, in my opinion, Significant Natural Features on the Site being the Maitai River and Kākā Hill. The integrity and natural character of these two features would largely be maintained or enhanced. On Kākā Hill there is a specific issue of proposed residential development covering over and modifying part of one of the legible “knobby knee” landforms.

Preservation of the Natural Character or the Coastal Environment

34. The western side of the Malvern Hills is part of the coastal environment in my opinion, north of the “bend”. The development enabled by PPC28 would not preserve the natural character of the ridge and thus it would not be protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. The proposed revegetation would restore a degree of natural character but within an urban environment such that overall natural character would not be preserved. In my view the urban expansion would constitute sprawl over the ridgeline. At present the open undeveloped ridgeline is a clear cap to upwards spread of urban development.

Natural Values of the Site and “Blue /Green” aspects of Structure Plan

35. I largely agree with Mr Milne that the “blue/green” aspects of the proposed structure plan would improve the natural values of the Site. Not all natural features of the Site are recognised and explicitly provided for such as the wet seeps and the floodplain.
36. One aspect that is of concern is the absence of biodiversity corridors linking hills to the coast as recommended by NCC.

Rural-Urban Boundary

37. The development enabled by PPC28 would not maintain the present strong rural-urban boundary. The existing Rural zoning is important for maintaining the clear boundary.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

38. My qualifications are a B.Sc. Geography (Canterbury University 1986) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture (Lincoln College 1988).
39. I established my first practice in 1992 in Christchurch. Since establishing my practice in Wanaka in 2001, the majority of my work has been in the space of landscape analysis, evaluation and landscape and visual effects assessment. This work has mainly been associated with resource consent applications for private rural subdivisions and dwellings in the Queenstown Lakes district. I have undertaken assessments and presented evidence at many council and Environment Court hearings. My most immediately relevant experience is my engagement by the Central Otago District Council relating to Private Plan Change 14 Shannon Farm. This was a 244ha farm and orchard holding near Cromwell, with a Structure Plan with around 140ha rezoned for rural lifestyle and urban residential development. Mr Milne was also involved in that case on behalf of the developer. It was resolved through mediation.
40. Over the last two years I have been engaged by the Waitaki District Council to carry out district-wide identification of Outstanding and Significant Natural Features and to identify the Coastal Environment and assess its natural character. This work is to inform its proposed District Plan.
41. I have no working experience in the Nelson-Tasman region to date.

PURPOSE OF EVIDENCE

42. I have been engaged by Save the Matai Inc. (“STM”) to provide expert landscape evidence in relation to their submission on Private Plan Change 28 (“PPC28”). The main issue in relation to my expertise is the effect on rural landscape character and landscape values, in particular the effect on amenity and on the natural freshwater and terrestrial values and natural character of the Site. I understand the focus of STM’s concern is the lower Maitai River valley of which Kākā Stream is a tributary, however my evidence relates to the entire PPC28 site (“the Site”).
43. The overall purpose of my evidence is to provide advice on whether the proposed re-zoning from rural living to part rural, part open space, part urban residential, part commercial, is appropriate as a whole or in part, with regard to the various hierarchical

statutory provisions for landscape and amenity and based on consideration of the range of landscape and amenity values associated with or inherent in the Site.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EXPERT WITNESSES

44. While this is not an Environment Court hearing I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses issued as part of the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 (Part 7).
45. I agree to comply with the Code of Conduct. I am satisfied that the matters addressed in this statement of evidence are within my expertise. I am not aware of any material facts that have either been omitted or might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in this statement of evidence.

INFORMATION RELIED UPON

46. I visited the vicinity of the Site on 9 and 10 February 2022. The weather was clear but cloudy the first day, turning to rain and low cloud the second day. I viewed the Site from various places within the lower Maitai Valley including Botanical Hill, Branford Park, Olive Hill, Sir Stanley Whitehead Reserve, the Maitai River true left between the cricket ground and Gibbs bridge; from the Cleveland/Atmore Terrace area, and the track/legal road on Sharlands Hill; and from public roads and places between the north end of Boulder Bank and Port Nelson. I was not able to visit the Site during that visit. If I am authorised to visit the Site itself, I intend to do so prior to presenting my evidence. However, as my evidence relates to broader landscape and amenity considerations rather than detailed site features, I do not consider that entering the Site is essential to the opinions expressed in my evidence.
47. I list all the information I have reviewed in preparing my evidence in **Appendix A**.
48. I participated in the landscape expert witness conferencing on 11 and 27 May 2022. Where relevant in my evidence below, I refer to the Landscape Joint Witness Statement ("LJWS"), dated 21 May 2022.

NOTE REGARDING ACRONYMS AND REFERENCES

49. In my evidence I have used the following acronyms for key documents:
 - BM/RMM – Boffa Miskell/Rough Milne and Mitchell (landscape architects)
 - LVAUD – Landscape and Visual Assessment and Urban Design Report (RMM)
 - PLDD – Preliminary Landscape Design Document (RMM)
 - NRMP – Nelson Resource Management Plan

- NZCPS – New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement
 - RPS – Regional Policy Statement
 - WWNP – Whakamahere Whakatu Nelson Plan
50. In my evidence numbers in square brackets refer to the paragraph in the evidence in chief (“EIC”) of Tony Milne or the section in the document being referred to.
51. There are a number of Annexures and Attachments that form part of my evidence. These are:
- Attachment A – Figures
 - Annexure A – Information reviewed
 - Annexure B – Landscape study extracts
 - Annexure C – Landscape units
 - Annexure D – Landscape values
 - Annexure E – Statutory provisions
 - Annexure F – Visibility and visual effects analysis

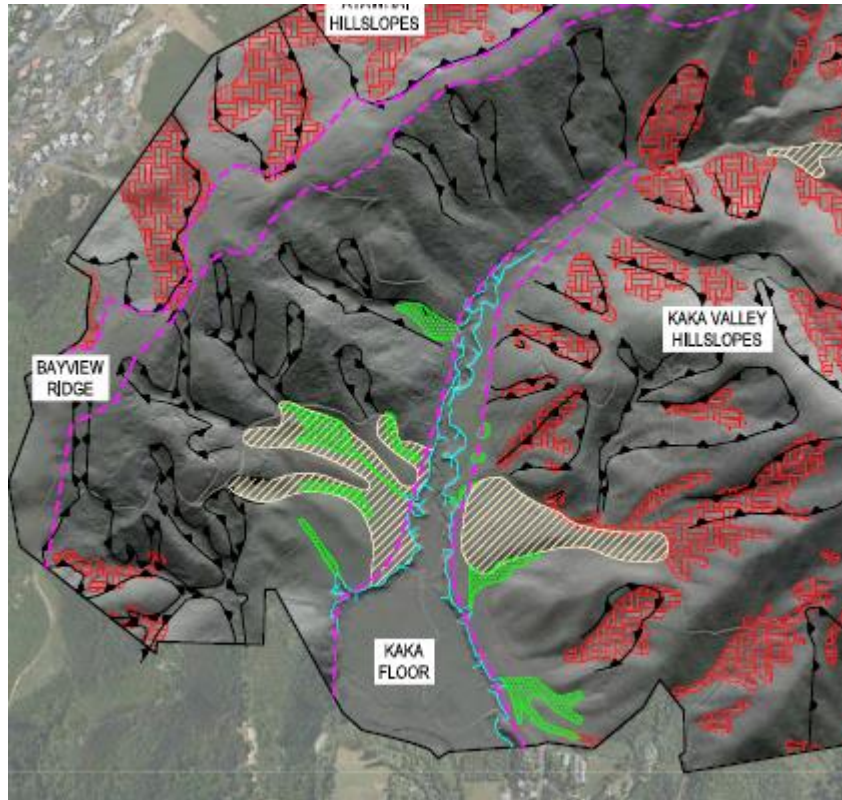
EVIDENCE

Introduction

52. PPC28 seeks to enable urban development of land within a sensitive receiving environment in the Kākā Valley, a tributary of the lower Maitai River valley and both sides of the Malvern Hills through:
- Rezoning approximately 146 ha of land in the 287ha site from Rural and Rural-Higher Density Small Holdings Area to mixed Residential, Open Space and Recreation and Suburban Commercial, with the balance retained as Rural primarily for ecological restoration purposes.
 - Introduction of a new Schedule X to the NRMP with an accompanying Structure Plan.
 - Amendments to Chapter 7 – Residential Zone, Chapter 9 – Suburban Commercial Zone, Chapter 12 - Rural Zone.

- Proposed realignment of lower Kākā Stream, to be authorised in future through a separate resource consent application.
 - Amendments to the Road Hierarchy Planning Maps and Planning Overlay Maps.
53. PPC28 does not propose amendments to any regional plan provisions.
54. Aspects of PPC28 most relevant to my assessment are outlined below.
55. I have relied on the description in the AEE, in s4.0 of the LVAUD report, and in the s42A report for the details of PPC28 and the development it would enable. A draft Stormwater Management Plan and a detailed Landscape Concept for the lower Kākā Stream – Matai River confluence along with indicative cross-sections through the Kākā stream corridor have recently provided further detail. The draft Structure Plan (“SP”) and draft Schedule X have been revised after completion of conferencing. This has been provided as a .kmz file to enable 3D exploration in Google Earth and an interactive PDF file. Mr Milne’s Vegetation Overlay plan on p9 of his Graphic Attachment to his EIC is also helpful in understanding the “green” aspects of PPC28.
56. Regarding the 40m wide Kākā Stream corridor I note there is no provision for a minimum of 20m each side of the stream within zones that are not Rural. It appears from examination of aerial photos that this may serve to contain all the features I would describe as riparian. This would require ground truthing. It does not allow for a buffer however where urban areas adjoin.
57. There are no actively designed biodiversity corridors linking the valley floor to the ridgetops and promoting hills to coast linkages; and connecting the remnant kanuka clumps to other areas with native vegetation. There is a marked absence of coastal connections from the Walters Bluff area northwards.
58. The proposed Residential High Density zone (“Resi HDZ”) on the Kākā Stream-Maitai River confluence removes about half of the landform, reducing the potential for natural dynamic fluvial processes and wetland/riparian habitat.

59. The wet seeps shown on the Tonkin + Taylor map on p 16 of the Geotech Report (Appendix C4) are not identified on the SP (refer extract of map shown below). I note the requirement however in Sch X.9 13 to *Identify, protect and enhance all remaining natural wetlands and their margins*.



60. Schedule X.16 is *A Vegetation and Fauna Management Plan shall be prepared and submitted with any application for subdivision or development within Schedule X. This shall address the 'Residential Green Overlay' and the 'Revegetation Overlay' as shown within the Maitahi Bayview Structure Plan*. I am not aware of any information explaining the intent of either of these layers so whether and to what degree they would confer positive benefits is unable to be assessed with certainty.
61. Similarly, there is repeated reference in the LVAUD to the likelihood of clustering of dwellings separated by areas of open space within the residential zones on the steeper slopes where there are slope stability constraints. There is no specific provision for this pattern of development in Schedule X.
62. The Rural High Density Smallholding ("RuHDSH") areas have been removed completely from the SP with some of this area being retained as Rural zoning "for enhanced habitat and biodiversity".
63. There is a new recreational trail across the west face of the Malvern Hills, running through the residential areas, and a new road link proposed to Walters Bluff.

64. There are some off-site implications such as changes to the Ralphine Way-Maitai Valley Road intersection and an add-on pedestrian/cyclist lane to Gibbs Bridge. Mr Greenaway in his EIC also described likely “hardening” of some facilities such as shared trails and around Dennes Hole but qualified that by saying these things may happen anyway due to increasing levels of use.
65. Rule X.5c has been amended to include views from Maitai Valley Road when assessing effects of buildings on skylines. This should serve as a proxy for other views of the skyline from public places along the Maitai River. I also note that a branch of primary ridgeline has been extended over the broad shoulder at Walters Bluff. I explain later in my evidence there remains an issue with the definition of primary ridgeline.

PPC28 SITE AND RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

The Site

66. I largely rely on the various accounts and photo record of the Site’s features and landscape characteristics set out in the RMM reports and in the technical reports appended to PPC28 request (geology/geotech, ecology, and environmental review) and the supplementary terrestrial report by Ben Robertson. The Nelson Landscape Study reports BM 2005 and 2015/16 provide broader contextual information. I have viewed the Site from adjoining public places in my field work in February and have explored it in Google Earth over time and space (including Street View).
67. A comprehensive understanding of the Site overall is demonstrated in the landscape documents supporting PPC28. An area where there appears to be information gaps are in terrestrial ecology relating to presence of wildlife including invertebrates, and in detailed inventory of native plants present. Mr Haddon of STM advises me of several native tree and shrub species on the Site including mature trees that have not been recorded in the documentation. I observed mature kanuka adjacent to Branford Park, a threatened species, that has not been recorded.
68. The ecological surveys only record what was present at the time of survey and has not covered the entire Site. A large part of the Site has been cleared since 2019 and is recorded now as pasture/cleared land. I am not aware of any record of the species in those areas prior to clearance. I understand from Mr Haddon that it was mainly gorse, sparsely interspersed with native regenerating species such as mahoe and kanuka as well as some mamaku and tree fuchsia on the eastern side of the Malvern Hills ridge. There is no advice I am aware of relating to the natural regeneration potential of the Site, if it was retired from farming and managed to promote regeneration.

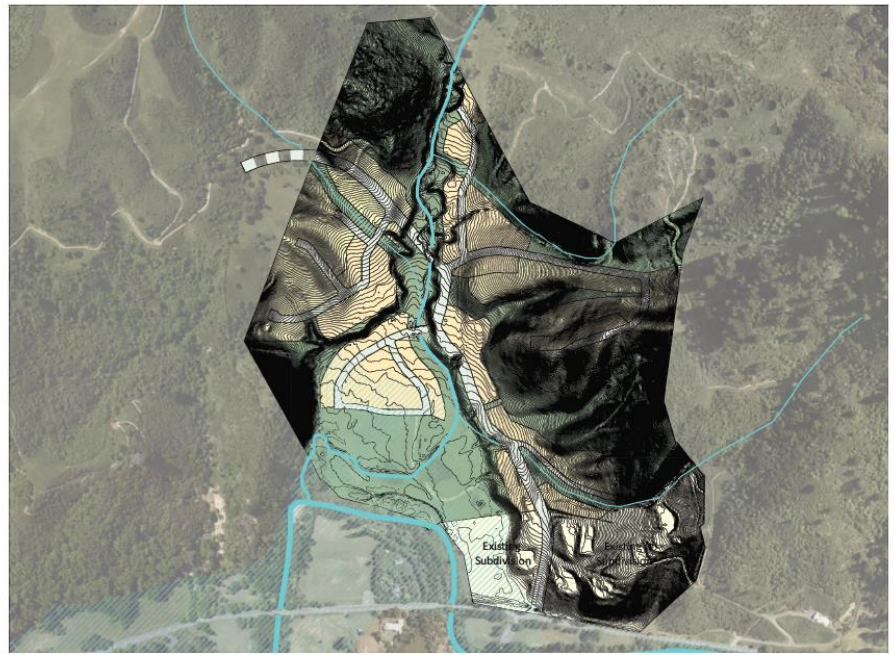
69. A distinctive feature of the Site and its immediate surrounds are the volcanic hills weathered into conical forms of varying sizes. Kākā Hill has “knobby knees” on its lower southwest flank (see photo below taken from Atmore Terrace) This expresses a lithological change in weathering between hard and softer rock².



70. The west side and summit area of the Malvern Hills, and portions of the east flank are devoid of vegetation of any stature due to grazing use and recent large-scale clearance. This has left an extremely open and bare landscape. I agree with Mr Milne [95] that the ridge has very low absorption capacity for any built development or earthworks. In contrast Kākā Hill has a mosaic cover of pasture and woody vegetation.
71. The small catchment at the south end of the Malvern Hills is hydrologically separate flowing out through Branford Park on the west side of Olive Hill. It contains a large patch of mature woody vegetation including kanuka.
72. The alluvial terrace at the Kākā Stream/Maitai River confluence is a distinctive “meander floodplain” feature shaped by migrations of both water bodies over time, as shown in the figure below:

² P3 Geology and Geotechnical Hazards Report – CCKV Maitai Dev Co LP and Bayview Nelson Ltd
Tonkin and Taylor Ltd March 2021

2.5(A)
CONCEPT PLAN WITH CONTOUR



Spatial Analysis
Southern & Kaitake Valley
B&A Ref # 27024

13

Source: B&A Spatial Analysis Plan Ref.2.5(A)

B&A

73. I understand that the most recent natural course of lower Kākā Stream is around the western edge of the floodplain.
74. It is acknowledged there are no rights of public access to any part of the Site. I understand that prior to 2019 a Ridgeline Track along the summit of the Malvern Hills was open to the public and was popular for walking and cycling. The photos in the RMM reports convey the impression of excellent panoramic views from the ridgeline. Much of the Site is visible from public places, however. It has landscape that is contiguous with reserve landscape along its south boundaries.
75. I understand there is no as of right public access to Kākā Hill. Sharlands Mountain Bike Park has been established in the plantation pine forest on the adjoining Ngāti Koata-owned land including a trail along the ridgeline. Entry is by annual permit which can be obtained through membership of the Nelson Mountain Bike Club³. The tracks are closed at present for harvest. I understand that the summit of Kākā Hill is waahi tapu (expressing its historic use as a lookout).
76. Formally recorded sensitive or significant parts of the Site are the SNA 166 on the top of Kākā Hill (for kanuka and matagouri shrubland); the Landscape Overlay shown on the NRMP maps (ridgeline areas); and Riparian Overlay over the mid to lower reaches

³ <https://nelsonmtb.club/sharlands/>

of Kākā Stream margin and Maitai River margin, relating to natural/hazard and/or public access matters. The Maitai River has a Conservation Priority 1 designation (for freshwater habitat and water quality, public access and recreation and flood hazard mitigation). Kākā Stream and its tributaries has a Conservation Priority 2 and 3 designations (for freshwater habitat and water quality, public access and recreation and flood hazard mitigation).

77. Landscape Characterisation – the Site has been mapped into four separate landscape units⁴ for the purposes of describing and analysing the Site and for assessment purposes. These were agreed as appropriate in the LJWS but as my assessment progressed, I found a slightly finer framework to be more helpful to my assessment. I delineate seven units on my Fig. 1, **Attachment A** and describe them in my **Appendix C**. This mapping recognises the discrete landform units of the Site each with their own character.

Permitted Baseline and current potential Development

78. I acknowledge that the Rural zoned area could be subdivided in several rural smallholdings down to 15ha minimum, and that the RuHDSH area could be subdivided into some 35-40 lots. A subdivision like this would require roading for access coming off Ralphine Way and along the Malvern Hills ridge, as shown in Sheet 5 of Mr Milne's attachment to his EIC. A subdivision like this may or may not incorporate the "green-blue" aspects of PPC28, to greater or lesser degree. Increased traffic, noise, night lighting and general residential/smallholding activity generated by up to 50 properties would, in my experience, be associated with a subdivision like this.
79. Mr Milne [169,172] refers to the potential for substantial development sites being located on or closely proximate to the ridge. However, subdivision, earthworks, and dwelling construction are controlled activities and subject to mandatory design parameters. Location and appearance can be controlled and consequent effect on landscape character and quality to ensure natural values are protected.
80. Continued agricultural use or horticultural use, or plantation forestry, are also permitted activities, subject to meeting standards. Remaining native vegetation on the Site is also poorly protected under current NRMP vegetation clearance rules, unless it meets the definition of "forest". Freshwater ecosystems including wetlands however are protected under the NPS FW and NES-FW.

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

81. Broadly the landscape context of the Site is the area bounded by Nelson Haven and Boulder Bank in a west seaward direction; by Dodson Valley and Wells Hill to the

⁴ Refer Sheet 4 in the PPC28 RMM Graphic Attachment

north; by the inland ranges of Hira Forest to the east; Sharlands Hill to the south; and the Grampians, Sugarloaf and Port Hills containing central Nelson round to the port. Fig. 2 in **Attachment A** shows the Site in context and give place names referred to in my evidence. The NRMP Overlays are shown on Figure 3 in **Attachment A**.

82. The Site comprises two parts with different relationships to the context. The bulk of the Site comprises most of Kākā Stream valley, a north-south trending tributary of the lower Maitai River. The conical bulk of Kākā Hill and its leading ridge to the north forms the higher true left (east side) of the valley; the lower and more subdued Malvern Hills forms the true right (west side). The valley is narrow and closed in over the upper part but opens out to the south merging with the lower Maitai River valley, with the bulk of Sharlands Hill effectively blocking in the valley to the south. This valley is visually and spatially integrated with the Maitai River corridor, and is looked down into from surrounding public elevated places such as Botanical Hill, Branford Park and Olive Hill, and Sharlands Hill.
83. The Maitai Valley is a main access to the interior ranges and public conservation areas where there is a plethora of recreational activities ranging from golf course, camping areas, and swimming holes to a network of mountain bike trails and hiking tracks.
84. The Maitai River is the significant waterway, running through the heart of Nelson to its mouth at the port. It is of considerable significance to tangata whenua and to the Nelson community generally. The several branches of its headwaters originate far to the east on the Bryant Range. Between 2014-2018, several projects were implemented to improve the health of the river under Project Maitai, such as riparian planting.
85. The Site includes the upper western seaward-facing slopes of the Malvern Hills. It is part of the coastal urban area, overlooking and backdropping Nelson Haven and forming a broad band of open farmland running across the top of and capping the existing suburbs between Walters Bluff and Bayview.
86. The small basin in the southwest part of the Site is the last separate true right side stream catchment of the Maitai River as it passes through the narrow gap between the Malvern Hills and Sharlands Hill.
87. The relationship of the valley and Malvern Hills ridge to Nelson city and its place in the pattern of urban development is described in sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the PLDD . Mr Milne states [90, 39] that urban development on the hills is part of the characteristic and valued views of Nelson, and exists on valley floors and across the lower and middle slopes of the hills. I agree with this observation but reiterate that, apart from the case of the Port Hills ridge, urban development only occurs across lower to mid slopes of the seaward slopes to an altitude of 100-150m, mostly closer to 100-120m.

88. Being topographically constrained between the sea and rugged hill ranges, there is pressure for rural areas like Kākā Valley to accommodate urban expansion. However the Maitai River corridor and wider valley context including Kākā Valley is highly valued for its open space and quiet rural character, and the numerous recreational opportunities in a rural setting of high visual amenity (linear parks, river trails, swimming holes and sports facilities) all in close proximity to central Nelson. The Malvern Hills ridge provides an immediate “greenbelt” backdrop to the urban areas, with Kākā Hill a second tier high inland green and open backdrop. Botanical Hill, Branford Park/Olive Hill and Sir Stanley Whitehead reserves immediately adjoin the Site, which forms the immediate landscape outlook to the east and north from these areas.
89. The rural open character of the Site, with its remnants of and regenerating native shrubland and broadleaf forest in a mosaic pattern with pasture and naturalised exotic species, is visual relief to both the urban areas in a coastal direction and the expanses of monotonous pine plantation forest inland and opposite on Sharlands Hill.

Nelson Landscape Studies

90. The NRMP identifies a class of significant landscape in the Landscape Overlays. These relate to ridgelines and skylines, as visually sensitive areas. This mapping however is derived from landscape assessment carried out almost 25 years ago. There are other areas that have been assessed more recently as constituting significant or visual amenity landscape in the vicinity of and including the Site.
91. The suite of Nelson landscape studies undertaken by BM in 2005 and through 2015/2016 were intended to inform the mapping of outstanding natural landscapes (“ONL”) and outstanding natural features (“ONF”) and significant or visual amenity landscapes (“SL” or “VAL”) in the draft WWNP. At this stage, the recommendations of these studies are no more than that, and I not aware of any peer review of them. My opinion is they are relevant being the most recent landscape studies but are open to review.
92. I have reviewed these studies. My overview notes and relevant extracts from the studies contained in Appendix B. The key findings of these studies, with my key observations about them, are as follows:
 - The whole of the Site was identified as significant/amenity landscape in the 2005 study (Kākā Hill to Gentle Annie Ridgelines and Hilltops; Maitai River Valley amenity landscape). The Maitai Valley landscape included the lower side slopes and floor of Kākā Stream valley almost to the north end of the Site. These were identified as areas of high value for, inter alia, their open undeveloped rural

character contributing high amenity value and as relatively natural backdrop and ridge/skylines to Nelson city.

- The 2015/16 Nelson studies characterised the Site and its surrounds a little differently. The ridgelines area was split between Atawhai Hills (of which Kākā Hill is the southern end) and Malvern Hills Landscape Character Units (“LCU”), divided by Kākā Stream. The Maitai Valley LCU was more or less the same but did not extend so far up the Kākā Stream valley floor.
- The main purpose of the 2015 study was to identify ONL/ONFs. That was extended to include significant or visual amenity “RMA s7c” landscapes (the SLs or VALs). It did not include a brief to identify Significant Natural Features or, simply, Significant Features (“SNFs” or “SFs”). Only landscapes that scored Very High for associative values and High in at least one other category were classed as Significant.
- The Maitai Valley landscape qualified as a SL on account of its Very High associative values and High perceptual values. It was ranked Low to Moderate for biophysical values.
- The other two LCUs did not qualify as SL. The Atawhai Hills were identified as VAL⁵ but were not identified as SL in the final evaluation with a Moderate overall landscape value. They were ranked High and Moderate for Biophysical factors, Moderate and High for Perceptual factors and Moderate and Low for associative factors with overall Moderate value.⁶ This does not necessarily mean that Kākā Hill itself has Moderate landscape value or is not SL, or a SNF. My document review identified Kākā Hill as having significant value as a macro landscape element and backdrop to Nelson City. It also has value to tangata whenua and has a Significant Natural Area (per s6(c) RMA) on it.
- The Malvern Hills ranked High for overall landscape value and had High and Moderate ratings in all three categories of factors. They were also identified as VAL that did not become SL in the final evaluation. This does not necessarily mean the southern end of this landscape unit, what is referred to as Botanical Hill in the PPC28, does not constitute SNF or SL. Botanical Hill proper together with adjacent reserve areas clearly has Very High associative and perceptual values.
- Two issues are relevant in this study and have affected the outcomes. One is whether LCUs are more spatially or place-based (whole of valley) or

⁵ Refer pp 50 and 53 of the Nelson Landscape Evaluation Study BM April 2016

⁶ Refer Appendix 2 Nelson Landscape Study Landscape Evaluation BM November 2016

landform/vegetation based (whole of ridge). Kākā Valley can be readily defined as a distinct enclosed valley landscape unit, as a sub-unit of the lower Maitai valley. The second issue is scale. The overall rating for Atawhai Hills or Malvern Hills is in my opinion not typical of the rating for Kākā Hill or Botanical Hill as smaller, discreet easily defined areas of landscape or as Features. If the purposes are for managing landscape change through district plan rules the approach taken needs careful consideration. In my experience, existing district-wide classifications of landscape for outstanding or significant value needs a closer analysis related to proposals for change on specific sites.

- The April 2015 Landscape Evaluation study was limited to reviewing the appropriateness of the existing dated NRMP Landscape Overlay. This was only in relation to views of the ridges from the west, as backdrop to the city and coast. The outcome of this work are the Backdrop and Skyline areas mapped for the draft WWNP. The relevance and sensitivity of the upper slopes and skyline from the Maitai valley was not assessed. The Backdrop and Skyline areas therefore only express one particular set of values. The PPC28 SP has adopted these areas as an Overlay. I note the SL of the Maitai River Valley has not adopted, however. Further, between these two areas is a band of leftover land on the west side of Kākā Valley, and Kākā Hill which clearly has significant value is left out.
 - The Backdrop areas modified the existing Landscape Overlay, lifting it up along much of the Malvern Hills but dropping it down on Kākā Hill. I illustrate the changes on Fig. 4 in my **Attachment A**. Consequently, the lower slopes within the Site on the west side of Malvern Hills fall outside the Backdrop area and have no special landscape status.
93. The only landscape overlay with statutory weight is the existing NRMP Landscape Overlay. I understand NCC has adopted the Backdrop and Skyline areas. I do not know whether it has adopted the Maitai Valley SL. In any case, these classifications have not been tested and peer reviewed through the pending proposed regional/district plan process, and are open to review
94. In my opinion, based on the landscape values of the Site in context which I will cover shortly, the entire Kākā Valley part of the Site is a SL and Kākā Hill could be defined as a SNF (as could Botanical Hill proper). I accept the Backdrop and Skyline areas as they are but acknowledge they do not include all backdrop and skyline areas that are valued or are sensitive to change. I note that Mr Milne [76,77] considers the areas mapped as Backdrop to be appropriate with respect to backdrop/skyline areas from a Maitai River Valley perspective. With respect to views from the Maitai River valley reserves, there are parts of skyline – and large areas of what I would describe as sensitive “backdrop” landscape - that are not included in the SP Backdrop overlay.

Notwithstanding this, the upper slopes and skylines are more sensitive parts of what I regard as SL.

95. Those parts of the Site that fall outside of the Backdrop area on the west side of the Malvern Hills ridge do not express High value such that they might be described as SL in my opinion. They have a buffer role between existing urban and more sensitive ridgeline however and are indistinguishable in character from the Backdrop area.
96. I note that Method NA2.4.7 is *Council will consider and, where appropriate, prepare a landscape management strategy for the city foothills and the Maitai Valley in order to co-ordinate land management and to preserve and enhance Nelson's landscape setting*. I am not aware of any such strategy.

LANDSCAPE VALUES OF THE SITE

97. The Site's landscape character and values are described in the Site Analysis in Part 3 of the PLDD, Sheets 15-45 and in the LVAUD Report Part 3.4 Sheets 18-27 and I consider them to be comprehensive. These largely reflect the values described in the BM Nelson Landscape studies, which are contained in the extracts in my **Appendix B** and are also reflected in AP9.6 and AP9.7 of the NRMP (limited to the Landscape Overlay areas).
98. I describe the landscape character of each of the 7 landscape units used in my assessment in my **Appendix C**. This includes an assessment of the levels of legibility, intactness and natural character, openness, open character/enclosure, simplicity/complexity, and visual coherence for each unit.
99. The explicit identification of landscape values of the Site and its immediate context is very important. The landscape elements and patterns, and the attributes that are derived from the way they occur in the landscape, underlie many of the landscape's perceptual values, and also contain the biophysical values. "Associative" values are related to the way people use or have used the landscape (recreational values, historic events, cultural meaning). All of these values are the things that need to be recognised, protected/maintained and/or enhanced in accordance with the various policies of the RPS and the NRMP.
100. Given the importance of explicitly and comprehensively identifying the values, I summarise these in the following section. A fuller description with photos to illustrate is contained in my **Appendix D**.

General Values

101. The most repeated value, and seemingly one of the most important ones, is the relatively natural green, open space hill backdrop/green belt and prominent

ridgeline/skyline of the Malvern Hills relevant to Nelson city, major roads in and out of the city and the coast. The south end of the Malvern Hills Ridge between Walters Bluff and the Maitai Valley including Botanical Hill is particularly important, being highly visible from central Nelson. The summit area of the southern end within the Site forms a clean smooth undulating landform skyline or a natural “front” ridgeline set against the interior “second tier” higher range backdrops, such as Kākā Hill. It appears as a thin green band above the richly textured wooded areas on the adjoining reserves.

102. The northern section of the ridge - being specifically the undeveloped upper slopes above or capping the existing areas of urban development - and the “clean” natural landform summit ridge/skyline, are valued mainly as viewed from SH6/Atawhai Drive and across the watery expanse of Nelson Haven, as well as from residential streets and properties in Walters Bluff, Brooklands/Capeview and Bayview, and from the Nelson port/marina area.
103. Kākā Hill is a large distinctive landform feature that is highly visible from parts of the central urban area. It is part of the hill range backdrop as well; and dominates the view travelling inland (east) along Maitai Valley Road.
104. Another important value associated with the Kākā/Maitai Valley is the picturesque/scenic or pleasant and peaceful rural setting adding to the quality of recreational experience in the Maitai River reserve areas generally; from the Maitai Valley Road as scenic driving and/or en route to other recreational facilities and areas; and with respect to the outlook from Botanical Hill, Branford Park and Olive Hill.

The Maitai River esplanade reserves are considered to be one of Nelson’s most important flagship open space and recreation areas. This status reflects their high use, visibility and proximity to the city.⁷

Coherent picturesque scenic qualities contributing an iconic and memorable inland valley landscape setting in close proximity to Nelson⁸

The Site retains a coherent and attractive rural context framing the margins of the Maitai River.⁹

105. The overall landscape value of the Maitai/Kākā Stream Valley is described well in the Executive Summary and other sections of the Kākā Valley Landscape Capacity Study:

Kākā Valley forms a relatively well enclosed part of the larger Maitai Valley landscape character area. This has not been identified as an outstanding natural feature or landscape but

⁷ Para. 46 R Greenaway EIC quote from the Esplanade and Foreshores Management Plan

⁸ Section D Landscape Evaluation - Matai Valley – Nelson Landscape Evaluation Study BM 2015

⁹ Part 3.5.2 Kākā Valley Capacity Study 2018

includes the Maitai River recognised as a significant landscape on account of its high sensory values and important cultural and recreation associations. The key landscape characteristics of the wider Maitai Valley includes important open space and recreation values, steep vegetated slopes enclosing the valley floor, dispersed rural lifestyle development and strong cultural associations including a source of pakohē (argillite) and food gathering for early Māori.”

The Maitai Valley landscape character area is part of the “valleys” character type which generally form the setting for recreational use and rural lifestyle settlement which have become established. (Part 3.1)

“The Kākā Valley forms part of a larger scenic inland valley associated with the Maitai River. Much of the valley maintains an intimate scale with a high level of enclosure established by topography and areas of vegetation, particularly along the Maitai River. (Part 3.3.4)

106. The Kākā Stream valley forms a large part of this picturesque setting. The “knobby knees” on the base of Kākā Hill add considerably to the visual interest and pleasantness of this scene. The moderate to high attributes of legibility, natural character, and visual coherence described in my characterisation in **Appendix C** confer high aesthetic values. There are very few small areas of the Site that are not part of the attractive rural landscape setting enjoyed from the various public areas adjoining or overlooking it. This landscape setting also contributes to the natural character of the Maitai River and Kākā Stream and their margins, which are themselves discrete natural features within the Site.
107. The clean natural skylines are a particular visual focus seen from the west and the east. Many views of the skylines and upper slopes are framed pleasingly between foreground trees or viewed through a filter of deciduous treetops.
108. The Landscape Overlay (and the more recent Backdrop and Skyline areas) formally recognise the value of these skyline areas: *because of the contribution they make to the city’s identity and sense of place.* (Appendix 9 AP9 Overview). However as stated earlier they do not include all valued skyline/ridgeline areas as they only relate to views from the west.
109. The values of the Overlay areas are summarised in Appendix 9 of the NRMP:

AP9.6 Botanical Hill - Malvern Hills

AP9.6.iv The Malvern Range is important to the context of the city because it provides a visual backdrop to the eastern side of the city, which balances the containment of the Port Hills ridge on the west. The area is also important for its contribution to the city’s green belt

AP9.7 Kākā Hill

AP9.7.iii The area contributes to the city’s setting by forming the foreground and entrance to Nelson Province and Nelson City. It is important to the Nelson landscape framework and is strategic as part of the distant city backdrop.

110. Part NA2.3.3 of the NRPS refers to “gateways” between urban and rural areas. The mouth of the Maitai River valley between Botanical Hill/Branford Park and Sharlands Hill and the Kākā Stream Valley is considered to constitute a “gateway” landscape being the transition area from the urban area and the rural to more remote and natural

interior. It is an area that has visual connections with the city and is in close proximity (within 1-3km). The reserve areas and the pastoral/natural character of Kākā Stream valley with the pockets of rural living areas (and taking into account the RuHDSH zoning) provide an appropriate transition. This area is shown on my Fig. 5 in **Attachment A**.

Specific Values in Addition to General Values

111. There are values associated with specific features or parts of the Site, which contribute to the overall values just described, as follows:

Biophysical

- Distinctive highly legible volcanic conical hills including the knobby knees of Kākā Hill; part of a larger group of these distinctive place-making landforms including Olive Hill, Botanical Hill and Sharlands Hill.
- *legible rolling summits and spur crests characteristic of weathered volcanic processes¹⁰.*
- Patches of remnant and regenerating indigenous vegetation.
- Mature kanuka remnants, mature individual trees
- Kākā Hill SNA166 - *The site's other main value is in it being an integral part of a much larger tract (c500 ha) of native forest/scrub vegetation that runs continuously (or very nearly so) for c8km from the Kākā Hill area northward, almost to Gentle Annie at Hira. This larger tract (of which this site is a part) is a significant corridor for native forest birds and other wildlife between the Nelson City area and the Hira area. It is important that a continuous corridor of vegetation is maintained along the length of this site so that these important connectivity values are retained.¹¹*
- The Site is tagged as part of a northern extension to the Nelson Halo¹² project (landscape-scale indigenous forest and habitat restoration).
- The riparian margin of the Kākā Hill tributary provides an important linkage from the vegetated parkland of Botanical Hill to the wetland/SNA at the site's northern boundary.¹³

¹⁰ Section D Landscape Evaluation Malvern Hills

¹¹ SNA166 NCC Report in RFI NCC p9

¹² <http://www.nelson.govt.nz/environment/nelson-nature/natural-environment/the-nelson-halo/>

Nelson Nature is working with the community to develop the Nelson Halo – an area of predator control and habitat enhancement outside the predator-free Brook Waimarama Sanctuary to provide a safe haven for wildlife and help bring the wild into people's lives.

¹³ RFI NCC p9

- Numerous smaller side streams and wetlands as part of the Maitai system.
- Maitai River is a significant landscape element.
- The seaward side of the Malvern Hills contribute natural landform and ridgeline/skyline to the coastal environment, with a minor kanuka shrubland element.
- The southwest basin is contiguous and integral with Branford Park in a visual, vegetative and drainage sense.

Perceptual

- The ridgelines and upper slope areas offer expansive landscape experiences and coastal views.
- In contrast, the valley offers a more intimate and sheltered experience with various nooks and crannies creating mystery and interest.
- The inherent visual qualities of the indigenous vegetation in its generally natural patterns.
- The Valley, Kākā Hill and Malvern Hills ridge are the focus of the view north from Sharlands Hill, a public place. The urban areas do not feature in this view north despite their proximity.
- Maintains a strong demarcation between urban and rural.
- Visual relief to both urban areas and plantation forested ranges.
- Transient/dynamic phenomena such as weather conditions (mist, strong light and shadow), river flow and quality changes; presence of wildlife, seasonal changes in vegetation (e.g., scent and visible presence of flowering).

Associative

- The Maitai River is also important in terms of Māori cultural associations including its long association with pakohe (argillite) mining and food gathering. Other important Maori values which apply to the Maitahi River are Kaitiakitanga (guardianship), Maui, Mana, Wairua, ecosystem health, public access, amenity, transport, and human health for recreation.¹⁴

¹⁴ Foster & McArthur, 2018 in Part 3.1 p4 Kākā Valley Capacity Study

- Kākā Hill is waahi tapu understood to stem from its role as a lookout location and the Maitai River corridor as awawhito and source of mahinga kai.
- The summit of the Malvern Hills was until recently available for public walk/cycle access along the Ridgeline Track; the Kākā Hill ridge outside the Site but adjacent is part of the Sharlands Mountain Bike Park and it is expected it would offer expansive views.
- Part of the early Maitai Run farmed by the Richardson family with historic and local heritage values and a colourful history.

Review of RMM Assessment of Values

112. Assessment of the landscape values of the Site is contained in part 3.4 of the LVAUD. The assessment is framed around the 4 landscape units used by RMM. I comment on their conclusions in the following table:

Kākā Valley • <i>Biophysical</i>: Moderate-High – only in close association with the Maitai River and confluence terracing; much reduced elsewhere. • <i>Perceptual</i>: Moderate – limited visibility, to a section of Maitai Valley Road; moderate aesthetic and sensory value. • <i>Associative</i>: Low – privately owned land.	• Agree with biophysical rating. I disagree with the reason and the limited area to which the rating is applied. There are riparian and freshwater habitat values in the middle portion of Kākā Stream which remains as a central natural feature. There are wetlands/wet seeps up on the debris fans and remnants of native vegetation through the area (shown as Vegetation Overlay on Sheet 9 of RMM Graphic Attachment). • Agree with perceptual rating. However, the valley floor is readily visible from places other than Maitai Valley Road e.g., the end of Ralphine Way, or Olive Hill. • Disagree. Private ownership does not necessarily confer low associative value. The farm base including historic buildings is in this area. The heritage value may increase the associative value. This area is also immediately adjacent to the Maitai River corridor and includes an elbow of the river. The Site and wider area also have important cultural values. This is valued shared landscape. Associative value likely to be Moderate.
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Kākā Hill • <i>Biophysical</i> – Moderate: a large natural landform but highly modified by plantation forestry. • <i>Perceptual</i>: High – memorable green backdrop, highly visible, vivid legible conical form, high level of visual coherence. • <i>Associative</i>: Low to Moderate – the only value is for tangata whenua.	• Disagree – assess values as Moderate-High. There is no plantation forestry on the hill in the Site. Many remnants of indigenous vegetation; has SNA on top; distinctive conical landform with knees. • Agree. • Disagree - assess value to be Moderate due to cultural values and shared visual landscape feature; macro element of Nelson backdrop; strong contribution to sense of place
South End of Malvern Hills (Botanical Hill) • <i>Biophysical</i>: High – distinctive landform and woody native vegetative cover • <i>Perpetual</i>: High – highly memorable, part of green backdrop, visually coherent, open rolling natural ridge, readily accessible • <i>Associative</i>: Very High – Centre of NZ Monument and (highly accessible) recreational use into Branford Park and Olive Hill and to Walters Bluff.	• Agree, kanuka remnant • Agree, Site is also immediate setting for Branford Park and Olive Hill • Agree although the Centre of New Zealand monument is outside the Site; former Ridgeline Track; setting for adjacent reserves
Malvern Hills • <i>Biophysical</i>: Moderate – mainly due to the natural open rolling ridge. • <i>Perceptual</i>: High – vividness and memorability as backdrop to Nelson Haven, relatively natural and visually coherent with no built development intruding into it • <i>Associative</i>: Moderate - former Ridgeline Track	• Agree with biophysical rating • Agree with perceptual rating. • Agree with moderate associative rating, but also consider it receives this ranking due to shared value of backdrop/skyline

113. Mr Milne [105] states that significant areas of the Site are covered by the Backdrop and Skyline overlay. There are other parts of the Site that are significant in my view, notwithstanding my view that the whole of Kākā Valley is an SL. The Maitai River is not in the backdrop area. Mr Milne also states that the Backdrop areas have limited natural appeal other than the dominant landform [149]. I agree but note that is due in

part to the extensive recent vegetation clearance. There are some remaining clumps of indigenous vegetation.

114. The following is a summary of the key elements, features, attributes, and associative values of the Site that need to be retained or sustained to maintain existing landscape values and the level of amenity associated with them. By elements I mean physical elements that make up the landscape. By features I mean discrete distinctive larger features such as the Maitai River. By attributes I mean the perceptual qualities such as openness. By associative values I mean the values derived from a cultural meaning attached to the Site such as its historic heritage and the waahi tapu area on Kaka Hill.

Summary Key Elements and Features

- clean open skylines of natural landform and/or vegetation of consistent or coherent character (no obvious buildings or structures)
- vegetation is the dominant surface element. Woody vegetation pervasive preferably native; especially At Risk/Threatened species such as kanuka
- mosaic pattern of vegetation of variable colour, texture and stature reflecting natural ambient conditions
- conical landforms remain legible and retain their integrity
- Kākā Hill as a large distinctive feature, retain its integrity and legibility
- remnant and regenerating native shrubland and forest especially mature trees
- kanuka and matagouri in the SNA
- all wetlands and their margins
- Kākā Stream as healthy hill stream with riparian vegetation and clean water; side streams also expressed with riparian vegetation as part of the system
- Maitai River as a significant natural feature with a broad riparian margin of appropriate scale
- lower terraced floodplain retains its legibility and integrity (such as it is) including scalloped edges
- natural dynamic river and stream processes able to continue and are not constrained
- transient (natural river flow conditions, wildlife presence, seasonal vegetation changes, strong light over legible landform)
- potential for landscape scale restoration of habitat and meaningful contribution to the Nelson Halo/northern biodiversity corridor; and for hills to sea biodiversity linkages
- cultural historic heritage elements

Summary of Key Attributes

- openness/ruralness – only farm buildings or rural living as per current zoning; rural land uses (pastoral, open space/recreation, nature conservation)
- spatial open character to at least a moderate degree enabling views deep into the Site (i.e., not simply planted out); tree vegetation on Site can frame views of the Site
- moderate to High level of Visual Coherence due to repeating elements and patterns over the Site on a large scale, and dominance of more natural patterns (applies more to Kākā Hill, upper Kākā Valley and the south Malvern Hill basin); there may be some discordant elements such as tracking, fencing, clearance patterns
- natural character – moderate to high degrees of natural character commensurate with mixed farming, rural living and regeneration and nature conservation uses, vegetation and landform overwhelmingly dominant and in natural patterns more than not, especially along the river
- rural quiet and tranquillity (commensurate with the permitted level of rural living development)
- rural dark (commensurate with the permitted level of rural living development)
- sounds of wildlife (mainly birds) – requires habitat and retention of wildlife corridors
- other typically rural sounds and smells

Key Associative Values (not already covered)

- recreational/public access opportunities especially on ridgelines and along waterways
- visual access to the landscape, setting for recreational activities shared and enjoyed by many
- tangata whenua values

LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

Resource Management Act 1991

115. In this section I will briefly summarise the statutory matters relevant to landscape matters. This provides the framework for carrying out the assessment of effects. The full extract of the relevant provisions is contained in my **Appendix E** for ready reference.
116. The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and rivers and their margins and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development (s6(a)) is a relevant matter of national importance that must be provided for. The Maitai River and Kākā Stream are both “rivers” and there are wetlands on the Site.
117. There are no outstanding natural features or landscapes associated with the Site.
118. The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values (s7(c)) and the general quality of the environment (s7(f)) are relevant matters that the decision-maker in this case shall have particular regard to.

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (“NZCPS”)

119. Whether the Site contains land/landscape that is part of the Coastal Environment (“CE”) was an issue and point of disagreement in the LJWS. Mr Girvan and Mr Milne have adopted the CE defined in the 2015 BM Nelson Coastal landscape study. The area defined as CE in the BM study is different from the CE Overlay in the NRMP GIS mapping; it takes in more land but does not include any of the Site.
120. The Planning JWS confirms that the Site is not part of the CE with regard to the current NRMP maps, however it was also recorded in the second JWS that the planners were unable to conclude whether the Site included any part of the CE and deferred that assessment to the landscape experts. I note Mr Milne maintains the Site to all intents and purposes does not include any part of the CE¹⁵. I accept that the NRMP 2013 planning maps do not show any part of the Site within the CE.
121. My opinion is that the western side of the Malvern Hills between the “bend” in the ridge near Walters Bluff and its north end is part of the CE. This is mainly because the inland boundary is typically determined to the first main ridgeline from the active coastal margin, within reason¹⁶. In this case the ridge of the Malvern Hills is less than 1km from the edge of Nelson Haven. South of Walters Bluff the ridge bends away from the sea – Botanical Hill is 1.7km away. Policy 1 f) of the CPS is a relevant criterion in my opinion: *f) elements and features that contribute to the natural character, landscape, visual qualities or amenity values*. Malvern Hill ridge very much frames the view along the coast. In some views it is the immediate backdrop seen across Nelson Haven. The hill ridge and skyline are the most natural parts of this view and complement or balance the natural expanse of Nelson Haven. The photos below show the strong relationship of the Malvern Hills with the coast and the expanse of Nelson Haven.

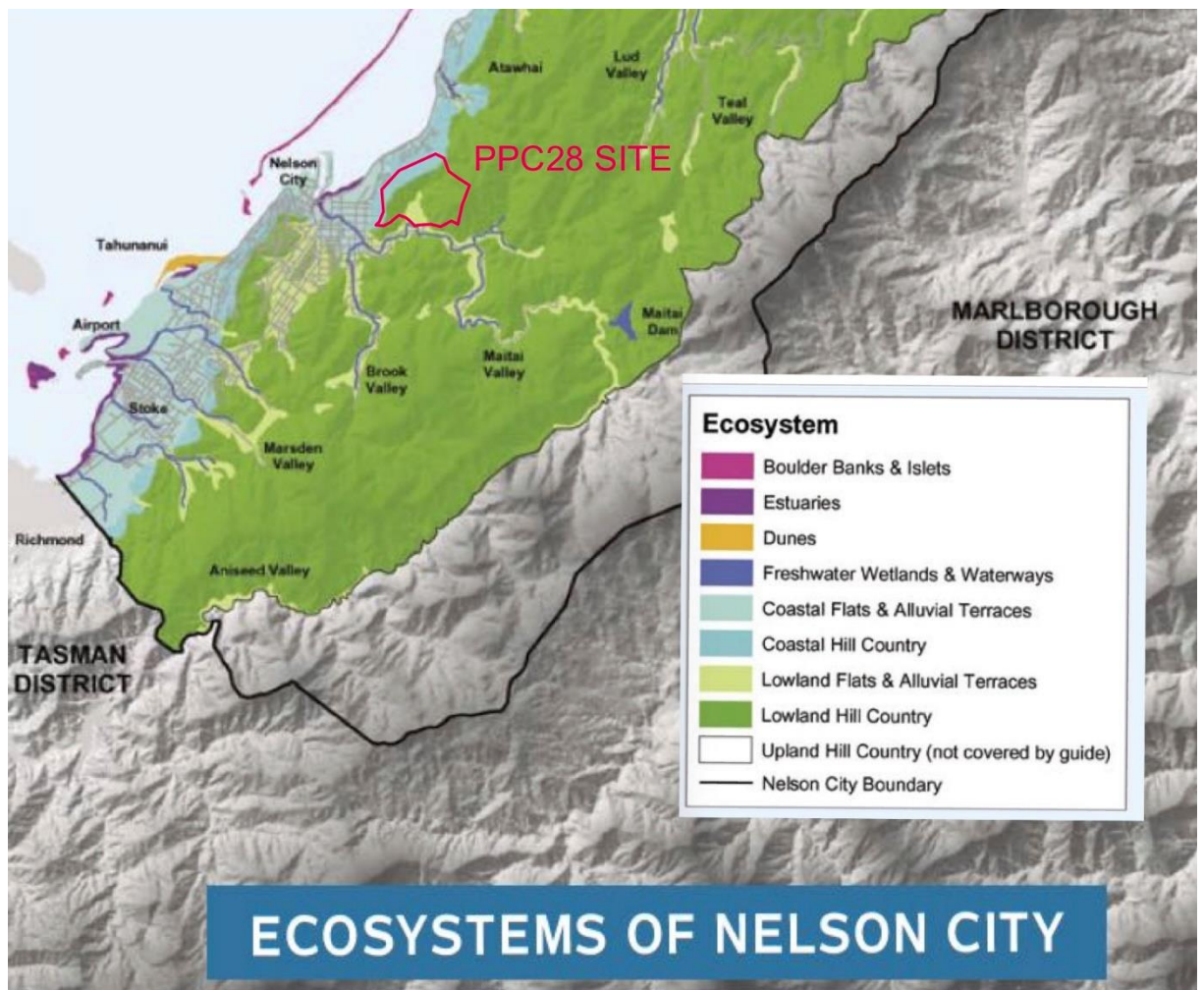


¹⁵ Part 3.5 p11 Natural Character Assessment Report RMM June 2022

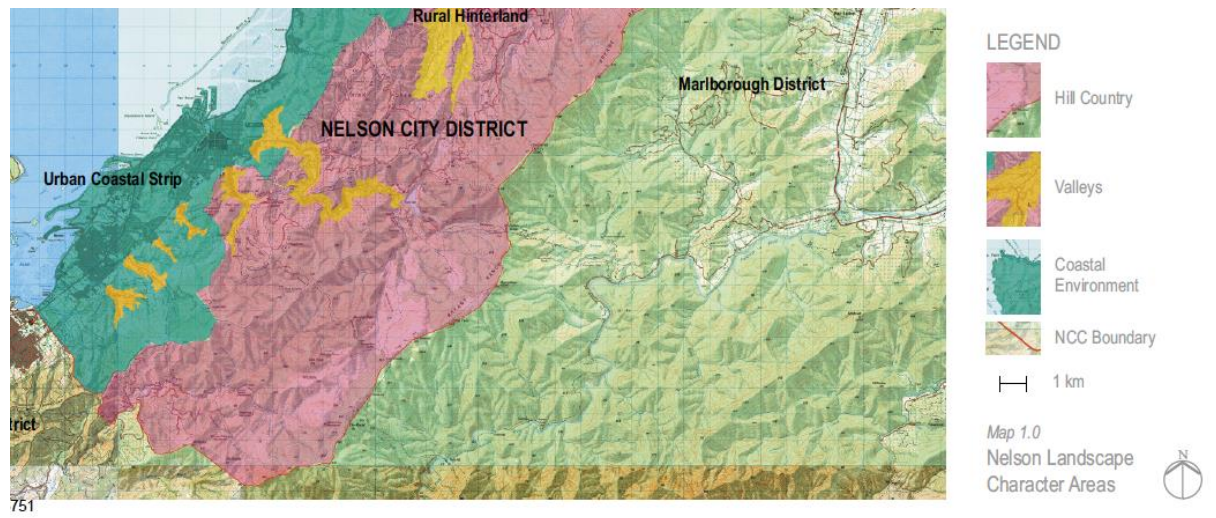
¹⁶ Refer pp. 15-16 of the Nelson Coastal Study BM 2015



122. Being in proximity to the coast, it is also possible the western faces supported vegetation and wildlife associated with the coast land interface. In Living Heritage – Growing Native Plants in Nelson, the western side of the Malvern Hills is mapped as coastal forest ecosystem type as is shown below.



123. As shown in the extract from Map 1 below, that the 2005 Nelson landscape study mapped a generous CE, extending to the Kākā Hill ridge and encompassing all of the Site. I do not think it extends that far.



124. The definition of the CE in Chapter 2 of the NRMP includes the land backdrop, which is inconsistent with what is mapped as CE in the NRMP. The NRMP also states however that urban areas are excluded, hence the narrow strip through Nelson city.
125. The 2015 Nelson Coastal Study defined the CE somewhat more broadly (see map from Fig 9 on following page). Somewhat inconsistently however the urban areas were included but the open more natural hillside above was not. The reasoning was that Nelson Haven has an attenuating effect meaning that coastal processes are likely to be less active on the Malvern Hills. The approach to identifying the CE focused was weighted towards biophysical factors and did not appear to give similar weight to perceptual factors. The upper slopes were placed in a Coastal Context Zone C as shown in the diagram below:

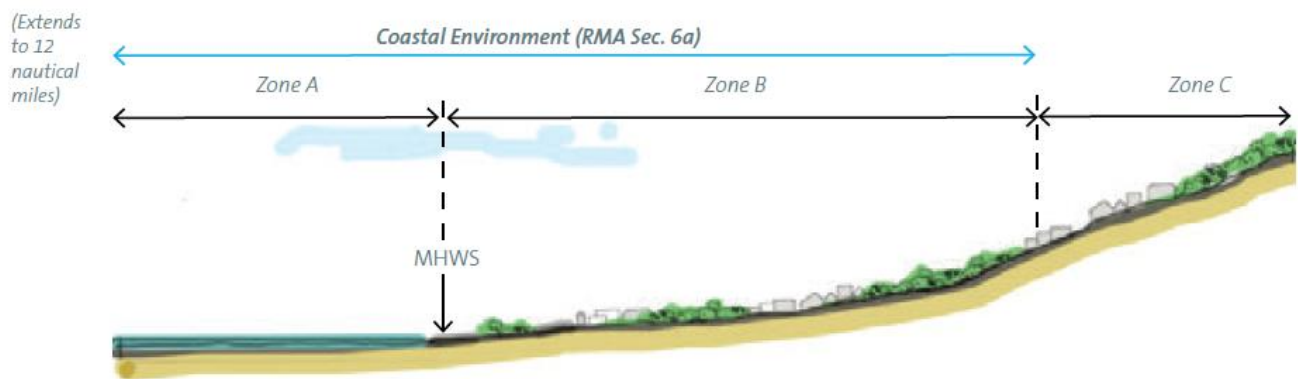


Illustration 8. Representative Coastal Environment Diagram of Malvern Hills

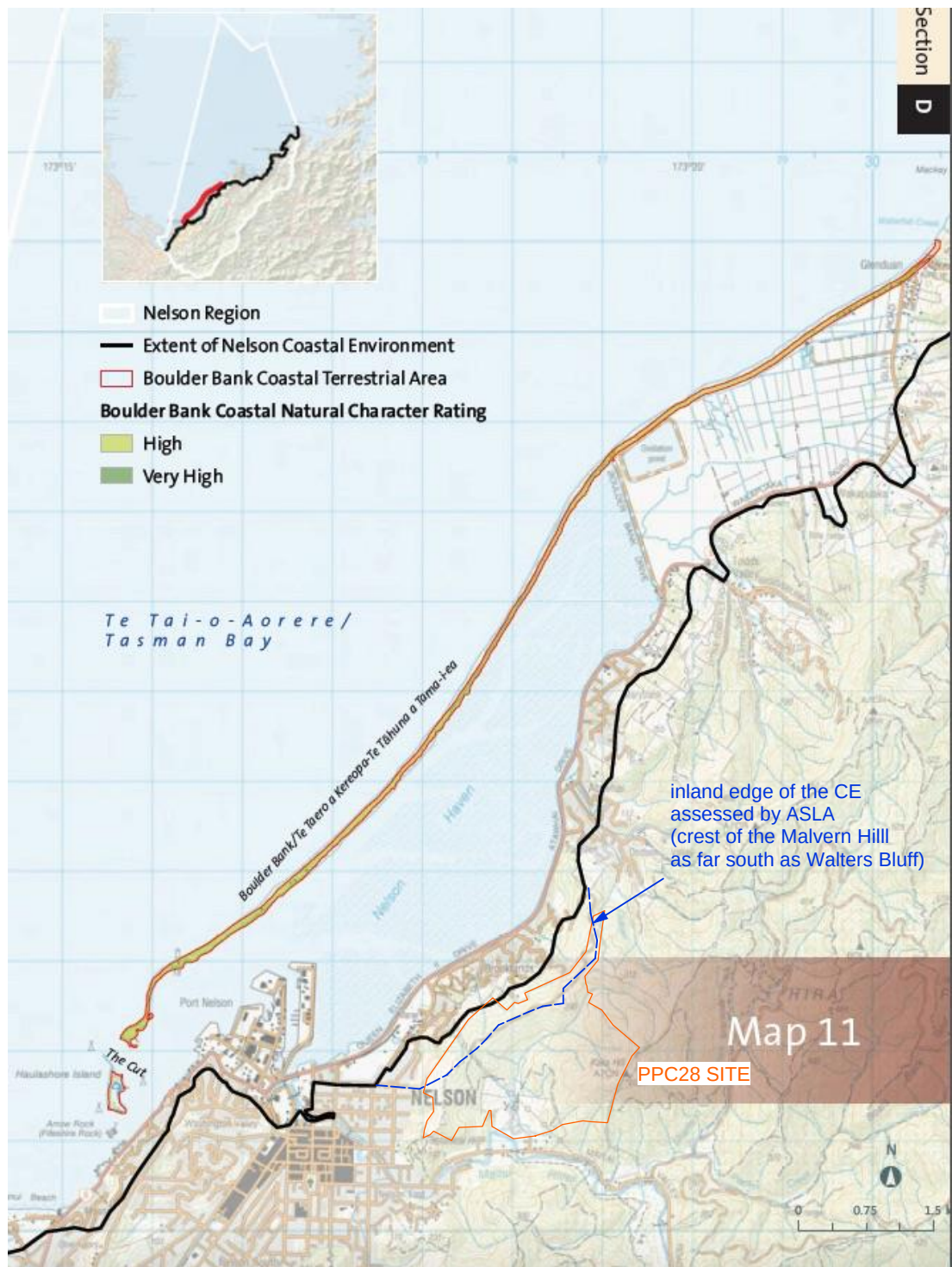


**Fig. 9 Definition of the Coastal Environment relative to the PPC28 Site
Natural Character of the Coastal Environment Study
BMP 2015**

126. I note however that the final delineation was overall a professional judgement, and that the study stated *it is important to recognise that each coastline is different and different factors will come into play when considering the extent of the coastline* (2nd para p16); and *It should be noted that, in some places, the landward extent of the coastal environment may be different to that identified in this study, for example through evaluation at a finer scale.* (1st para p15).
127. There are a number of policies in the NZCPS that are relevant to the landscape in a CE (my underline):

Policy 6 *Activities in the Coastal Environment - encourages consolidation of urban development rather than expansion within the CE, and to avoid adverse visual impacts of development in sensitive areas such as prominent ridgelines.*

Policy 13 *Preservation of Natural Character - requires the avoidance of significant adverse effects and avoidance, mitigation or remedy of lesser adverse effects in the coastal environment (where it is not outstanding) and sets out a range of factors that contribute to natural character including night lighting and noise.*

Policy 14 *Restoration of Natural Character - to promote restoration of natural character by identifying opportunities, and by imposing conditions on resource consents; sets out a range of options for how this could be done in a practical sense. On the PPC28 site this might include active planting to restore native cover using local native species, encouraging natural regeneration, with plant/animal pest control, and protecting and restoring any riparian areas such as overland flow paths*

Policy 15 *Natural features and Natural Landscapes - to protect natural landscape in the CE from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. It repeats Policy 13 requiring the avoidance of significant adverse effects and avoidance, mitigation or remedy of lesser adverse effects in the coastal environment (where it is not outstanding) and sets out a range of factors that affect to natural character including night lighting and noise.*

Nelson Regional Policy Statement 1997 (“RPS”)

128. There are objectives and policies relevant to landscape and visual amenity matters in the RPS. These remain relevant despite the age of the RPS.
129. Policy **DH1.3.1** - requires that areas of high natural amenity value and open space such as greenbelt areas and areas that make a significant contribution to the natural character of the CE are identified and appropriately protected, where *the degree to which the site contributes to the aesthetic coherence of the wider townscape setting* is a factor for determining significance.
130. The Site has high natural amenity values and is a significant area of open space and greenbelt. It also is part of the CE which has been discussed previously.

131. **DH 1.3.3** - states that when determining appropriateness of areas for urban expansion requires NCC to assess inter alia the impacts on natural values of riparian/coastal margins, on regionally significant natural features and landscapes (i.e., visual amenity landscapes), significant vegetation and habitat, taonga, regionally significant amenity values and the effect on the demarcation of the rural: urban interface.
132. As the Nelson region is comparatively very small, “regional” values are correspondingly of more local scale compared to regional values of Canterbury or Otago regions for example.
133. The Site has riparian (and wetland) areas which includes the Maitai River and its margin, it is arguably partly within the coastal margin, it has landscape that is comparatively natural, and it has natural features and (indigenous dominant) vegetation/habitat, Kākā Hill is of cultural significance to tangata whenua and is particularly a significant natural feature with significant vegetation on it, and the Site has amenity and recreation values of regional significance. The Site is also relevant to a clear demarcation of the rural: urban boundary.
134. Policies in this chapter provide clear direction on management of landscape quality and values. **Policy NA1.3.1/NA1.3.2** requires NCC to identify areas of significant amenity value, and to provide for their protection of the particular attributes that contribute to their amenity value.
135. In Issue **NA2.1** major threats to the landscape character of the Nelson City area are explicitly stated as including:
 - *residential expansion especially along prominent ridgelines in the urban area. These result in loss of natural colours and patterns, development of a saw tooth appearance to ridgelines from houses and other prominent structures, and loss of public views from the ridgeline.*
 - *Loss of views from within the urban area to prominent landscape features such as the coast or ridgelines. This may include the loss of prominent views from main routes in and out of the city, loss of views from within the central business district to the hills and coast, and*
 - *blurring of the urban rural interface*
136. **NA2.3** Policies require the preservation of natural and vegetated landscape character of the backdrop to Nelson city; to avoid development which detracts from the amenity afforded by the dominant ridgelines; and avoid development that which detracts from the views enjoyed in the city and related to the “gateways” between urban and rural areas and between different landscape units; and to protect significant landscapes throughout the city area including:
 - *macro features which contribute to the landscape setting of Nelson;*
 - *the natural or physical qualities of those areas that contribute to the amenity enjoyed;*
 - *the absence of adverse effects that would detract from amenity*

137. **Policy NA2.3.7** requires the recognition and protection of those landscapes and their attributes that contribute to the significance.
138. The summit and west seaward side of the Malvern Hills are part of the immediate backdrop to Nelson city including its northern suburbs, from the Maitai Valley to Atawhai. The west to southwest flank of Kākā Hill is a distinctive second tier backdrop area, viewed from the urban areas through the mouth of the Maitai River valley, framed by Botanical Hill and Branford Park to the left and Sharlands Hill to the right. These areas have a comparatively more natural and open, vegetated landscape character with “clean” ridgelines/skylines.
139. The lower Maitai Valley including Kākā Valley as a side valley, is in my opinion, a “gateway” landscape between the interior rural forested range and valley landscape and the coastal urban plains and Nelson Haven. I have mapped this “gateway” landscape in Figure 5 of my Attachment A.
140. “Significant” landscapes have been identified in a study carried out by Works Consultancy Services in 1994¹⁷ (the origin of the Landscape Overlay in the current NRMP plans); and more recently the Nelson landscape studies undertaken by BM published in 2005 and 2015/2016. These studies identified outstanding natural features and landscapes (there are none in the vicinity of the Site), the coastal environment and areas of high natural character in the coastal landscape (discussed in previous section), and areas of sensitive landscape including landscapes valued for their visual amenity (visual amenity landscapes). The relevant findings of these studies are discussed in earlier my evidence.

Other RPS policies relevant to landscape matters

141. Policy **NA2.3.9** is to preserve the natural character of the coastal environment. This has been discussed previously.
142. Policies under **NA3.3** relate to indigenous vegetation and habitat. They direct the promotion of retention, protection and management to actively enhance indigenous vegetation especially where it contributes to landscape, recreational and amenity values of regional significance. There is both mature remnant and regenerating indigenous vegetation on the Site which contributes to its landscape values, especially on Kākā Hill and in the basin adjacent to and contiguous with Branford Park/Olive Hill.
143. Policies under **NA5.3** require the protection of the natural character of riparian and coastal margins which contain regionally significant natural features, scenes or

¹⁷ Works Consultancy Services; (April 1994). Recreation, Conservation and Landscape Study Appendix III - Landscape Survey & Assessment; Prepared for Nelson City Council

landscapes and where water is an essential component, and where there are regionally significant recreational, amenity or other intrinsic values.

144. Policy **NA5.3.11** requires the dynamic nature of riparian and coastal margins to be recognised in relation to development within those areas.
145. Policy **NA5.3.12** requires NCC to advocate or promote management practises that will enhance natural characteristics and values.
146. The Site is considered to fall partly within the CE as previously discussed. Kākā Stream and its tributaries, and a part of the Maitai River, and their margins, are within the Site.

Nelson Resource Management Plan 2013 (“NRMP”)

147. A number of resource/landscape management themes (or issues) run through the various Issues, Objectives and Policies of the NRMP which are relevant to PPC28. There is considerable repetition. I have identified the themes relevant to landscape evaluation and effects assessment, set out in the table below with the relevant objectives and policies listed.

Theme/Issue	Overview/ Issue	Objective	Policy
The importance of the low hill ranges immediately surrounding and containing the coastal urban areas and, with parts of higher second tier ranges further inland, providing a relatively natural backdrop. These relatively natural landforms with a dominant vegetation cover largely free of built form and development are important for the distinctive setting, identity and sense of place, and the high quality of visual amenity, particular viewshafts from the city and recreation setting in the Nelson area. These areas are vulnerable to intrusive development with loss of natural character, visual coherence/amenity and openness affecting the above values.	Ch 4 RI5.1-iii, v, vi RI5.1.iii Ch 12 RUd.5 RU2.iii	Ch 5 DO9.1 Ch 12 RU2	Ch5 DO13A.1. DO13A.2.2 DO14.1 DO16.1.1.x
Open natural ridgelines and skylines are visually sensitive areas to be kept free of visible development; residential expansion along prominent ridgelines is a major threat	Ch 4 RI5.1.iv RI5.1.iii		CH5 DO9.i DO9.1.4a)
Protection of visual amenity values of Seaward facing hill slopes			DO9.1.4b)
Loss of public views from open ridgelines (existing, potential)			CH5 DO9.i)
Loss of or degradation of views of rural open/natural landscape or natural features from major transport routes in and out of Nelson city and between urban areas. Any development to avoid effects that may detract from the experience.			Ch 5 DO9.1.3
Loss of open space and rural or natural character/landscape values generally through urban encroachment/expansion or other development; protection of areas with high natural values (identified in the plan such as SNAs); protection of ready visual and	Ch 4 RI5.1.iii RI14.1.iii RI4A.1g)	Ch 5 DO5.1 DO15.1	Ch 5 DO5.1.1 DO15.1.1 DO15.1.3 DO16.1.1.x

physical access to open space and rural landscape from urban areas; maintain the greenbelt			
Avoid sprawling or sporadic residential subdivision in the coastal environment; any future development should be within a papakainga development or at residentially zoned land at the Glen; protect visual amenity of the CE			Ch5 DO7.1.5 DO7.1.6
Significant natural features are important to the biodiversity and sense of place and amenity of the Nelson environment. Protection of significant natural features. Degradation of the integrity and extent of significant natural features	Ch 4 RI6.1.i RI8.1.iv	CH5 DO9.1	CH5 DO9.1.1
Degradation of the natural character of the Coastal Environment; preservation of the natural character – or those attributes that contribute to the degree of natural character present - and protection from inappropriate land use subdivision and development; avoid adverse effects as far as practicable. It is recognised this may limit development opportunities	Ch 4 RI6.1.ii RI8.1.iv	Ch 5 DO6.1. DO7.1	Ch 5 DO6.1.2 DO6.1.4 DO7.1.2 DO7.1.4 DO7.1.5 DO9.1.4f
Degradation or loss of the natural character of rivers, wetlands and their margins through urban development and rural land use practices and subdivision for rural living; preservation of the natural character and protection from inappropriate land use subdivision and development - or protect those attributes that contribute to the degree of natural character present; protection of visual amenity values of riparian margins	Ch 4 RI6.1.ii RI8.1.iv RI18.ii,iii RI18.1.ii,iii,vi ,ix	Ch 5 DO6.1.	Ch 5 DO6.1.2 DO6.1.4 DO9.1.d) DO17.1.2
Reduced water quality due to rural practices and urban development and land use particularly in rivers valued for visual amenity and recreational use e.g., swimming; new development to incorporate appropriate devices for managing stormwater and runoff	Ch 4 RI15.1.ii RI18.ii,iii RI18.1.ix		Ch 5 DO19.1.1
Realignment of rivers/streams – avoidance of adverse effects on natural character and function; mimic natural form if it has to be realigned			Ch 5 DO17.1.11
Loss of or loss of potential for public access through riparian areas	Ch 4 RI12.1.i RI18.1.v		
General loss of visual amenity of an area through development due to the loss of visual coherence, change in visually dominant elements and disconnect with or erasure of existing elements and patterns underlying amenity value; loss of or degradation of “public” values inherent in private land	Ch 4 RI14.1.i RI16.1.v		Ch5 DO7.1.6 DO9.1.2
Effect of development on enjoyment of use of adjoining properties which may be private or public spaces (e.g. Bradford Park/Olive Hill. Maitai River corridor)	Ch 4 RI5.1.iii		Ch5 DO15.1.3
Importance of Biodiversity corridors and linkages; connectivity; inadequate protection of or provision for such corridors within new development particularly hills to coast and along riparian corridors; multiple values of functioning biodiversity corridors with specific reference to Structure Plans			Ch 5 DO5.1.2 9 see reasons) DO13A.2 DO13A.2.2
The need to protect enhance and restore indigenous biodiversity, natural ecosystem function and life-supporting capacity; potential loss of opportunities to do this, need to recognise and protect opportunities for the future or promote/require activity as part of development or use; opportunities identified and where practicable acted upon			Ch 5 DO5.1.2 9 see reasons) DO6.1.4 DO7.1.3 DO13A.2.2

Planting in riparian margins to be encouraged; avoid weed species; eco-sourcing			Ch 5 DO17.1.5
New urban design to respect/relate to/express the natural setting, retention/protection of natural features and integration into design of development. To reinforce those elements that best express Nelson's identity Development is preferred that requires the least modification of the natural environment (e.g., avoid loss of landforms, natural drainage patterns, loss of vegetation)		Ch5 DO13A.1 DO14.1	Ch 5 DO13A.1.1. DO14.1.1
The absorption capacity of the landscape for new development must be taken into account			DO14.1.2
The effects of providing services for new development need to be considered such as roading, stormwater management, street lighting, signage, telecom utilities, etc; avoidance/mitigation/ minimisation of adverse effects on landform and visual amenity		Ch5 DO14.3	Ch5 DO14.3.1 DO14.3.2
New urban development preferred in areas of existing development rather than expanding into rural areas, but some peripheral development may be appropriate and should be provided for; encourage infill development to promote compact urban form		Ch5 DO15.1	Ch 5 DO15.1.1 DO15.1.2
Maintenance of clear demarcation between urban and rural areas; appropriate transition between urban and rural			Ch5 DO15.1.3 DO16.1.1.x

VISIBILITY AND VISUAL CHANGE

148. In this section of my evidence, I discuss the visibility of the development PPC28 would enable, and the nature and extent of resultant visual change to the landscape. My assessment of the effect of this change on landscape character, natural character, and landscape values including visual amenity is provided later in my evidence and is undertaken in context of the outcomes sought by the relevant planning instruments.
149. As Mr Milne states [58], visual effects, or more correctly effects on visual amenity, are a subset of landscape effects. The first stage in visual impact assessment is to record and analyse the visibility and the nature and degree of visible change to a landscape or more correctly to the views of a landscape, typically from a fixed viewpoint (such as from Botanical Hill) or from a landscape experience perspective such as travelling along a road or walking by the Maitai River. This is what I term as a visual effect, as opposed to a visual amenity effect.
150. The methodology for doing this is set out on Sheet 10 of the LVAUD. This is appropriate methodology. Ultimately however it is not a mechanical technical exercise. Rather these factors are used to guide how analysis is carried out in the field and back at the office referring to the photographs taken. It is not necessary in this case to use only photos taken with a 50mm lens as this is not a visual analysis for a proposed development of a project nature. Whilst 50mm shots are helpful particularly in framed

views, the analysis is about broadscale change to the landscape which requires more panoramic shots.

151. A ZTV modelling exercise was undertaken. However, I do not think this has been very useful. The few diagrams I examined showed discrepancies compared to reality, for example, the visibility of Botanical Hill and Kākā Hill from the city centre showed up as Very Low which clearly is not the case. As stated in the LVAUD it also does not take into account any vertical elements.
152. My detailed visibility/visual effects analysis is contained in **Appendix F**. It is summarised below. I was able to view the Site in reasonably clear conditions from most viewpoints. The exception was views from the coast. I have also relied on the photos in the LVAUD and PLDD and Google Earth street view. The 3D Google Earth model provided by RMM has also be used for high level understanding.
153. I agree with Mr Milne [50, 59] and Mr Girvan [17] that the visibility of all or part of the development that PPC28 would allow does not necessarily mean there would be an adverse effect on visual amenity. I agree that what is relevant is the change in landscape values including visual amenity) caused by the visual effect or change in views.
154. In my visibility/visual effect analysis I record the extent to which I agree with the visual effect analysis contained in section 5.2 of the LVAUD Report, modified by the revised SP layout appended to Mr Milne’s EIC and illustrated in the Google Earth modelling. My comments on visual effect are only from public viewpoints.
155. As Mr Milne describes [40] the Site is broadly relevant to two viewing areas. Kākā Stream Valley is viewed from the south, from the Maitai Valley Road (“MVR”) and Maitai River corridor including its parks and reserves including Botanical Hill, Branford Park and Olive Hill, and from Sharlands Hill and suburbs on its northwest flank. These views are more enclosed and intimate with a prevalence of woody cover and topographical complexity and are associated with the Maitai River. The MVR is the route to interior recreation areas including the Dun Mountain Range. The Maitai River corridor is a popular and highly valued recreation area. The viewing audience would be reasonably large, regularly present, and I expect enjoying the landscape would be commonly central to purpose. Some viewers would simply be driving past intent on destination.
156. The seaward side of the Malvern Hills ridge is seen from the northwest to southwest, from a number of different parts of Nelson city including the port/marina, the main road hugging the coast, and from parts of the coast including Boulder Bank and Nelson Haven. In these views the hills are the very open and exposed seaward facing backdrop and open upper slopes to coastal suburbs on its mid to lower slopes and coastal plains strip. The ridge is now bald in appearance due to clearance of former shrubland which

was understood to be mostly gorse. Its simpler topographical form is fully exposed to view. The viewing audience is much larger and more varied.

157. Parts of the Site common to both viewing audiences are the Malvern Hills summit ridgeline/skyline and Kākā Hill. The southwest end of the Malvern Hills ridgeline and Kākā Hill are particularly relevant to central Nelson and are associated with the immediate green and open backdrop of Botanical Hill and Sir Stanley Whitehead Park. Sharlands Hill frames to the right with a mix of residential suburbs on its base slopes, and rough regenerating mixed exotic-native shrubland and plantation forest cover. The most expansive views of the Site are from the top of Sharlands Hill, and from Ralphine Way. There are a number of intimate views, for example Ralphine Way, Maitai River, Olive Hill, Branford Park and the top properties of the existing suburbs along the west side of the Malvern Hills. Some of these views are also expansive.
158. The LVAUD has covered a good representation of viewpoints, with a couple of omissions that have been covered in Mr Milne's EIC. These are from the Grampians and Sharlands Hill tracks, and from the true left Maitai River reserve upstream of the Site. The viewpoints on the Port Hills ridge southwest of central Nelson are also relevant. Neither Mr Milne nor I have analysed visibility from these viewpoints. The range of viewpoints used in visibility analysis confirms the Site and the proposed development would be seen from a wide range of viewpoints and in different contexts.
159. The magnitude of visual change to the landscape viewed is generally **Moderate to High** in my opinion, rather than generally Low to Moderate as assessed by RMM. This is inevitable with the change from open pastoral and vegetated, more natural landscape to urban landscape on the scale proposed, even taking into account the potential visual change from the controlled-activity rural living permitted in the rural zones. The only set of views in which the magnitude of change would be less than Moderate are those from the central city and port area. It is Very Low from these areas, due to the screening effect of the intervening southwest end of the Malvern Hills Ridge which is not part of the Site (comprising Botanical Hill, Sir Stanley Whitehead Reserve and Branford Park almost up to the skyline).
160. There would be visual changes associated with the ecological restoration and revegetation activity in the proposed Open Space Zones and Rural zoned areas. These would be more subtle and similar to existing visual character, returning a visual character from times past. The magnitude of these changes would be **Low**.
161. A specific subset of change would be changes to the skylines and ridgelines. Clean open landform and vegetated lines would potentially become punctuated with buildings and a more eclectic mix of vegetation in the proposed residential zones, notwithstanding the proposed rule to prevent buildings protruding above a "primary" ridgeline. Not all actual skylines seen from public places are identified as the primary ridgeline in the

proposed SP. No provision is made for controlling location of built form on prominent ridgelines as demonstrated in this mock-up of built form on my photo of a view from Branford Park.



162. I summarise the nature and degree or magnitude of these visual changes in the table below. This analysis uses the same viewing places as Mr Milne to determine extent of change. The table states the conclusion reached for each viewing place in the RMM report and then provides my analysis of and conclusion on each.

Viewing Place	RMM rating, main reasons	My Analysis	My Magnitude of Change Rating
Lower Maitai Road	Moderate compared to potential permitted development, offsite tree vegetation, distance, obliqueness of view, vegetation/ open space will dominate over steeper slopes	Visible from various places, stationary/contemplative and/or moving Mature tree cover off site intervenes or frames in many views but there are sequential views giving awareness and building up a view. Residential development seen to wrap round lower knees of Kākā Hill, similar level to existing, partly covering closest knee form. Viewed at close range from Gibbs Bridge, Maitai River reserve. Development at far end of valley close to top of the ridge would be visible; and looking more north to northwest development on the west side would be visible from floor to skyline/ridgeline. Seen through gap framed by Olive Hill and Branford Park. Some skyline effects where skyline not part of Primary Ridgeline; also, prominent ridgeline effects e.g., from cricket ground; Gibbs Bridge. River reserve planting on Site has potential to block or filter views of valley floor development.	Moderate-High to High depending on viewpoint or number of views experienced. Very obvious visual change to Kākā Valley from very open rural with no obvious buildings (discrete farm base only) or open to a moderate-high degree with potential rural living development confined to valley floor; to completely built up over large areas with attendant traffic, lighting etc.

		Changes visible at Ralphine Way intersection and Gibbs Bridge; hardening of other facilities e.g., paths. Ecological restoration on Kākā Hill would be prominent to dominant in view over time.	
Maitai Valley Recreational Spaces	Moderate As above	Similar comments to above. Likely to be more contemplative views such as along the river or from the cricket ground. Greater variety of viewpoints including direct from the Maitai River reserve adjacent.	Moderate-High to High depending on viewpoint or number of views experienced. Reasons above.
Ralphine Way	Moderate As above also small viewing audience	More expansive and direct view of the development across the floor and on the western slopes. Rural living development could alternatively fill the foreground but would still have a more rural, possibly park-like, character.	High Fundamental shift in visual character. direct exposure to traffic on Ralphine Way.
Cleveland Atmore Terrace area	Moderate to High Looks like a logical extension of urban growth, off site reserve hills in foreground and Kākā Hill stay the same	More elevated views, with increasingly more of the development seen both sides of valley with altitude (e.g., accessing Sharlands Hill tracks). Floor based development not visible. Kākā Hill dominant in view, housing obvious wrapped around base partly covering legible landform.	Moderate to High but for different reasons. Obvious visual change. Kākā Valley is visual relief to the urban area and Malvern Hills Ridge seen as strongly containing and preventing inland spread.
Botanical Hill, Sir Stanley Whitehead Walkway (Walkway)	Not given	Clear view from Botanical Hill of lower Kākā Hill residential development and some of the High Density area on the floodplain; Kākā Hill as a whole dominant. Very north end of ridge visible, and band of development would be visible along it. Much of Site screened from this view due to wooded hill ridge of Branford Park. Very top of housing area and ridgeline road might be glimpsed close at hand to the north on or just below the ridgeline. View north along the ridge from north end of Walkway would contain housing development although revegetation on closer land could easily obscure view out. There are generally no views of the Site from the Walkway except perhaps at the south end some parts of the ridge in the Open Space Zone are visible.	Moderate-High from Botanical Hill; Moderate at least from north end of SSWW if left open – Very Low if planted out. Development in Kākā Valley would be very different to that permitted under the Ru-HDSH zoning.
Nelson City Centre SH6 Port to Walters Bluff	Not given	Many viewpoints but generally from the southwest, from the coastal plain. Botanical Hill and Sir Stanley Whitehead reserve on the south end of the Malvern Hills Ridge dominate the view; upper part of Kākā Hill visible framed through a gap with Sharlands Hill framing on right	Very Low as no development areas would be visible.
Port of Nelson, Marina	Moderate to High Appear as infill to same altitude, even balance of built and green	Full spread of west Malvern Hills visible from here, above existing suburbs and backdropped by higher inland ranges. Development would be visible covering most of the land up to the ridgeline, extending the existing suburbs upwards, as far as they can go. The new development would not appear as infill as it would be above the existing development.	Moderate to High With most of the visible ridge slopes zoned for Residential development inevitably the degree of change will be high despite the less dense backdrop zoning and vegetation provisions.

		Visible traffic on the summit road especially at night. This would reduce as vegetation grows.	
SH6 Coastal areas between Walters Bluff and Boulder Bank north end	Low to Moderate Appear as infill to same altitude, even balance of built and green, road will protect ridgetop	New development would be readily visible all along the upper slopes up to the ridgeline. It would be above all existing development. It would not be infill. Skyline effects should be avoided from SH6 but not from other places such as suburban streets. No explicit provision for mosaic of clustered built form and open green space within Residential zoned areas.	Moderate to High This is inevitable with a complete change from open rural landscape of a prominent ridgeline (with possibly 3-4 rural lifestyle houses) to urban density development, despite the larger lot sizes of the Backdrop Overlay.
Coastal Suburbs	Very Low Only considered primary views to the west	LVAUD report states that development will be visible from streets going up the hill and from residential properties looking upwards, especially for those bordering the Site (these areas were not visited).	Agree re primary views. Magnitude of change would inevitably be High looking upwards.

General Comments

163. Development of this scale would take several years. There would be highly visible to prominent construction effects including much bare and disturbed ground, cut and fill batters, construction infrastructure and moving machinery over different parts of the Site over a period of years. Once completed it would take a further number of years (between around 7-15) for planted vegetation to have any meaningful scale and canopy volume to absorb built form and roading cuts.
164. Other aspects of residential use of the Site that are less obvious but relevant to consider include night lighting including moving vehicle lights, flashing bicycle lights, flashing and/or coloured Christmas exterior lighting; moving traffic generally, smoke from fires, glare and glint from windows and roofs, effects of interior window blinds (which are typically white) and general domestic clutter on sections such as washing drying, parked caravans and boats, and children's toys. All these add to the fixed presence of buildings alone in a landscape. These elements can reduce the efficacy of any design controls on buildings such as colour.
165. Tree cover off-Site cannot be relied upon, particularly willow and poplar growth along the Maitai River. The visibility and visual change caused by the development that would be enabled by PPC28 must be considered in a long timeframe, of more than a hundred years. The disposition and extent of tree cover off the Site into the future can only be assumed, especially on private land. A reasonable assumption would be there will always be a degree of tree cover similar to the present cover but how particular views are framed or screened by trees is not known. A precautionary approach is recommended. I also observe that where trees are deciduous, there is greater exposure of the Site to view in winter.

166. The potential visual change that could occur with development either permitted or potentially available by the Rural and RuHDSH zoning has been taken into account. Whilst in some views there could appear to be a reasonably close-knit cluster of dwellings on the valley floor and lower slopes at RuHDSH density, this would still have a rural character. The potential visual change across the remainder of the Site would be such that the landscape would remain strongly rural with potentially scattered dwellings; the change would be unlikely to have an adverse effect or, at least, could be managed so that it did not. The level of development under this scenario is not comparable in its visual effect to swathes of urban development of the relatively high densities proposed by PPC28.
167. There is not sufficient detail around the provision for vegetation and open space to dominate over the steeper slopes in the proposed Residential zoned areas to enable assessment of it as a mitigating factor. There is no explanation and provision for the visual outcome of the Revegetation or Vegetation Overlays in the SP so the visual effect cannot be determined.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CHANGE ASSESSMENT

Change to Landscape Character

168. The development that PPC28 would provide for would - inevitably - change the existing landscape character. Essentially it would replace the strongly open rural landscape of the Kākā Valley with a mixed pastoral-regenerating-naturalised woody weed-remnant indigenous woodland cover to one that is part intensive urban development and part relatively natural regenerating indigenous ecosystems including improved riparian corridors. The change across upper Kākā Stream and on Kākā Hill would be enhancing existing elements patterns and process rather than changing them. Similarly, the change in character of the southwest end of the Malvern Ridge within the Open Space Zones areas would be subtle and enhance what is already there. The west side of the Malvern Hills has largely lost its recent character (woody vegetation cover mixed with pasture). It is in a transitional phase of bare cleared land. Remaining attributes are a very high level of openness and high natural landform legibility and character. This would not be retained through urban development notwithstanding the lower density Backdrop development with integrated revegetation. The clean natural landform or vegetated skylines and prominent ridgelines on lower Kākā Hill and on the Malvern Hills, ridge would be changed with a mix of woody vegetation and built form forming the skyline. There would also be traffic effects including headlights/bicycle lights at night. Other aspects that would change include night light effects, noise, and transient effects such as washing on lines, parked vehicles and changes in residential amenity vegetation through the year.

169. Overall, I consider that the degree of change to the landscape character would be **High** in Kākā Valley and **High** on the Malvern Hills in my opinion. I consider that RMM have understated the degree of change to landscape character that would occur. This is partly due to compartmentalising the Site in Kākā Valley (for example, Mr Milne states “*Development of the PPC28 site will result in a loss of some of its current rural character.*” [20] and “*On the PPC28 site, in places, pasture-covered paddocks will inevitably change.*” [21]. The existing character of Kākā Hill and upper Kākā Valley to some extent would be enhanced; but there would be a high level of change in the Valley – and across the Malvern Hills ridge - as a whole. They would not be broadly recognisable as the same rural places they are at present.
170. As noted, the changes that the currently zoned development would make to landscape character are not comparable to PPC28 changes in my opinion.
171. The LVAUD assessment in Part 7.2 and in the Conclusion states there will be changes in landscape character to both parts of the Site, in the following ways:
- there will an increase in built form.
 - development would result in a “minor loss of openness” on the Malvern Hills mid to upper slopes and the northwest slopes.
 - it will result in a reduction in perception of open space and green backdrop afforded by the Malvern Hills, and in Kākā Valley.
 - will retain Kākā Hills memorable backdrop.
 - it is consistent with development along the valley floor within Nelson South and the Brook.
 - appear as a logical extension to Nelson East.
 - a logical area of infill development between Davies Drive and Seawatch Way.
 - is similar in elevation to the residential development above Pearce Way and Seawatch Way and appears more logical than the existing boundary.
 - will retain the majority of the vegetated hillsides that enclose Kākā Valley.
 - has been designed to be sympathetic to the landscape features.
172. I agree that there will be an increase in built form, and that there will be reductions in open space and the “green backdrop”. I do not agree the reduction in openness would be minor. It would be **High**, inevitably.

173. I agree that Kākā Hill’s memorable green backdrop would be retained, although not completely. There would be partial loss of natural character, visual coherence and legibility where urban development would interfere with one of the knobby knees. Technically I agree the majority of vegetated hillsides enclosing Kākā Valley would be retained. The scale of urban development however would change the character of the valley substantially. I agree in part that the development proposed would be sympathetic to some of the Site’s natural features particularly its more important ones. Other features would be or have already been lost in anticipatory Site preparation work such as regenerating native vegetation.
174. I do not agree it is consistent with valley floor development as the form that would result covers a ridge, the opposite of being contained in valleys. Valley floor development pushing east from Nelson East could be regarded as an extension of existing character. Equally, reserves of green open space are characteristic.
175. I do not agree that the development on the northwest Malvern Hills would appear as “infill” and at similar elevation to existing residential development. The Site is completely above all existing development and serves to stop it spreading upwards and over the ridge. Existing development has an upper altitudinal limit of 100-120m mostly in a few places up to 140-150m. There is no other ridge of this altitude around Nelson with housing right to the top and over the other side.
176. Overall, I consider that PPC28 would have change the landscape character of the Site to a **High** degree.

Change to Natural Character

177. Mr Milne has provided a specific assessment of natural character (Natural Character Assessment Report RMM June 2022 referred to as the “NCAR”). He considers that the Site does not fall within the CE, so he does not assess any effects on the natural character of the CE.
178. The Site is highly modified overall especially within the proposed development areas, although it is still open space. However, this is partly due to extensive recent clearance of woody vegetation. It is not known what this vegetation was. It is understood to have been mostly gorse but reviewing Google Earth prior to 2019 shows there was a mosaic of other taller growing species, some of which were I understand from Mr Haddon were indigenous such as kanuka and mahoe. The cleared areas are transitional and if left undisturbed would most likely start to regenerate in a mix of native and exotic species.
179. Other parts of the Site have higher degrees of natural character. Overall, I assess the degree of natural character in Kākā Valley to be Moderate to Moderate-High, with

some areas of lower character and some areas of higher character. The Malvern Hills have a low-moderate degree of natural character due to the extent of clearance but dominance of natural landform.

180. I do not agree that the experience of the Site's natural features is almost non-existent due to private property preventing physical access (p15 NCAR). The Maitai River is largely within public land. Kākā Hill is a highly visible to prominent landscape element. The various ridges and gullies and the skylines are also "shared" landscape. The whole valley form and all its features can be visually accessed from Branford Park, Olive Hill and Sharlands Hill.
181. I agree that degree of natural character for the Maitahi River corridor in the vicinity of the Site is Moderate-High (p16 NCAR) and the degree of natural character of Lower Kākā Stream is Very Low (due to the complete modification for farming purposes) (p17 NCAR) and the middle reaches to be Low-Moderate (p18 NCAR). I agree the wetlands natural character is Low-Moderate (p19 NCAR).
182. I agree that with respect to the watery features and their margins there is significant potential for enhancement of natural character as well as ecological value and function.
183. With respect to the wider Site, the likely outcome would be dichotomous. The natural character and natural function of Kākā Hill and parts of the upper Kākā catchment area would improve and could reach High levels. The natural character of the remainder of the Site would drop markedly as urban development replaces open landscape dominated by vegetation and landform. The natural character of the northwest Malvern Hills would also drop dramatically to Very Low with spread of urban development over the entire area between and including Walters Bluff and Bayview. There would be large areas of highly modified landform and drainage and there is no natural vegetation left. Cultural elements, patterns and processes would overwhelmingly dominate. Natural character would be maintained or improved in the Open Space Zone over the southwest end, as far as it is seen from the west side. From Branford Park, there would be a reduction in natural character with intrusion of urban development into the basin despite the retention of most of the dense woody cover.
184. I do not agree with Mr Milne's view that there would be a significant improvement to the natural character of the Site as a whole [148 EIC]. It would inevitably be adversely impacted by the scale of urban development despite the gains made in some areas. Overall, my conclusion is that PPC28 would **significantly reduce** the natural character of large parts of the Site. Some parts would have enhanced natural character.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY EFFECTS ASSESSMENT WITH REFERENCE TO THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Preliminary

185. The first step in assessment, following characterisation and evaluation, is to define the landscape that is being assessed
186. Broadly the two different “landscapes” for the purposes of assessing effects for PPC28 are the lower Maitai Valley which includes the Kākā Stream valley (defined by Kākā Hill on the true left and the east side of the Malvern Hills ridge on the true right); and the west seaward-facing side of the Malvern Hills Ridge. The rolling open crest of the Malvern Hills Ridge is common to both; and Kākā Hill as a singular entity is also part of the landscape viewed from the west, from the urban areas of central and southwest Nelson city. The separate small basin catchment contiguous with Branford Park is for the purposes of this assessment included in the Maitai/Kākā Valley landscape.
187. The specific landscape elements, features, and patterns and the attributes derived from them that form the basis of the landscape values conferred by the Site in context are described in my evidence above. These are more explicitly what is required to be recognised, protected/maintained and/or enhanced through the various policies of the RPS and the NRMP.
188. A fundamental premise of the LVAUD reiterated in Mr Milne’s EIC is “*change in itself [to the landscape] is not considered adverse because Kākā Valley has been identified as an area which can absorb change as long as the landscape values are maintained or enhanced*” [107] and “*The premise of the PPCR is based on the Future Development Strategy in which Council has indicated that Kākā Valley can absorb development as to assist with accommodating Nelson’s growing community*” [106, also 110, 16, 20]. I agree with the premise that change in itself is not adverse and that Kākā Valley has been identified as an area that can absorb some change (as shown by an area of Rural-Small Holdings zoning). However, I do not agree that the Future Development Strategy (“FDS”) is relevant to the question of what level of landscape change is acceptable, for two reasons. First, I refer to and rely on the discussion of consultation on the FDS in Ms McCabe’s evidence. Second, I do not understand the landscape values of the Site to have been considered in any detail in determining that the Site is appropriate for inclusion in the FDS. The LVAUD concludes there would be adverse landscape and visual effects which are at least Moderate in a number of respects (i.e., more than minor) yet concludes that overall, the development enabled by PPC28 would be appropriate. I agree that the landscape and visual effects would be adverse. I do not agree PPC28 is appropriate.
189. It is my understanding that a community view has been expressed and acknowledged by NCC (obtained through survey/consultation) that the Maitai Valley (at least) has

high landscape value as it is (and could be with potential for ecological enhancement). There is strong opposition to the notion of any urban expansion into the valley.¹⁸ A review of a number of sections of the RPS and NRMP also convey to me the fundamental value placed upon the greenbelt and backdrop of green, open hills and a clean natural skyline/ridgeline as the distinctive setting for Nelson, its “sense of place” and identity.

190. DO9.1.2.i in the NRMP states “*The (rural) landscape is intended to remain green, spacious and uncluttered. The Zone, stretching from the intensively developed urban environment, through the less dense but settled small holdings area, to the virtually untouched conservation areas at the eastern and mountainous boundaries of the District, helps emphasise a sense of arrival to, or departure from, the city. The (Rural) Zone will maintain this character as it is a highly important component of the Nelson landscape.*”
191. In my view the fact the Kākā Valley has been “tagged” for urban expansion in the 2019 FDS has no bearing on the outcome of a landscape and visual effects assessment. Rather it is that assessment that will contribute the necessary information to decide if urban expansion of the nature proposed through PPC28 is appropriate.

Assessment

192. The various objectives and policies of the RPS and the NRMP provide the framework for the LVAUD. I note that the LVAUD only uses NRMP policies.
193. In my evidence above I set out broad themes or issues related to managing landscape change and protecting, maintaining or enhancing landscape values in the relevant planning documents. For brevity and to avoid repetition, I will use these themes to structure my assessment. The full wording relating to each of them can be found in the relevant issue, objective or policy set out in full in my **Appendix E**.
194. I have already described the degree of visual change and change to Landscape Character and Natural Character. I will discuss the effect of these changes on visual amenity in this section as well as expanding on effects of changes in landscape character on landscape values and natural values within the statutory framework.

Preservation and Enhancement of the Distinctive Setting for Nelson

195. The low, open, comparatively more natural and undeveloped hills immediately adjacent to and above the urban area, and ‘second tier’ hills, i.e., Kākā Hill, and the Maitai River are key macro elements and characteristics contributing to Nelson’s character and sense of place, and the quality of its urban environment. The fact they are largely free

¹⁸ Nelson Urban Growth Strategy 2006; consultation on the proposed Future Development Strategy 2022 (e.g., <https://www.tasman.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Attachment-Seven-Submissions-by-Question-with-Attachments-Highlighted-200422.pdf>)

of built form and development is stated as important. The character is to be preserved and enhanced. The purpose of the Landscape Overlays and the more recent Backdrop and Skyline Overlays is to formalise this need for protection.

196. The existing rural zoned land is “*important to maintain Nelsons image as a pleasant green environment where there is ready access to passive and recreational activities.... protection and preferably preservation is seen as important to maintain Nelson’s heritage...* (referring to significant natural features and flora and fauna) (RU2.iii). The significant Amenity Landscape of the Maitai Valley defined in 2005 and 2016 (which include Kākā Stream Valley) expresses this value. This landscape is not formally expressed in the NRMP mapping as it post-dates the plan.
197. Mr Milne’s view at [90] is that visible development very much forms a recognisable character that is Nelson and is part of the valued views that are to be protected appears to be at odds with the articulation in the RPS and NRMP of what makes Nelson distinctive and valued. As I stated earlier, urban development is restricted to lower hill slopes and the existing backdrop hills are valued for their green and open character free of development.
198. There are aspects of the proposal that would contribute positively to Nelson’s distinctive character and environmental quality. These include the retained rural zoning and proposed ecological enhancement of nearly all of Kākā Hill and upper Kākā Stream valley areas; the improvements to Kākā Stream as a freshwater corridor and to the Kākā -Maitai confluence area; the retention of most of the southwest basin and ridgeline area as open space contiguous with Botanical Hill and Branford Park/Olive Hill; and the provisions for public open space and recreational trails.
199. At a fundamental level, however, the conversion of open undeveloped hillsides and ridgeline/skyline to urban residential landscape character would not sustain what is distinctive and important for Nelson. The current zoning on the Site allows for up to 50 or so separate lots for rural living however this is not comparable to the urban development that PPC28 would enable. The LVAUD concludes that loss of openness¹⁹ as an adverse effect of a Low to Moderate degree [110] depending on. In my view the degree of change and the level of associated adverse effects would be High where expanses of open ridgeline currently form the view.
200. RMM describe the PPC28 development as a logical and cohesive extension of residential development in close proximity to Nelson within this area, in particular along valley floors as this occurs elsewhere in Nelson [107, 110]. This is one of the reasons put forward as a mitigating factor. This may be characteristic, but this does not

¹⁹ Defined as an absence of built form and human activity typically of a residential nature, but not tall vegetation (which relates to spatial open character).

necessarily mean it is a valued pattern especially if development has been ad hoc. Moreover, the development PPC28 would enable escapes the valley floor and spreads up the sides of the Malvern Hills ridge and over its summit albeit as lower density housing. It is largely contained to the valley floor on the east side of Kākā Valley, and I agree that the green and open Kākā Hill backdrop and the associated landscape values would be largely retained and even enhanced.

201. On Malvern Hills west side, the urban development is described by Mr Milne [106] in as logical “infill” housing and “*will not visually appear to sprawl along these upper slopes*” [27]; and in the LVAUD, as a logical extension to existing housing (part 7). This is wrong in my opinion. As the Site is consistently above the existing housing, and is zoned Rural, the development that would occur cannot be described as “infill” or as logical extensions. It would sit uncharacteristically above existing development.
202. Mr Milne in his EIC describes the likely future form of development on both sides of the Malvern Hills ridge as occurring in pockets or clusters separated by areas of open space [85, 99] and considers this would maintain the green backdrop and a sense of open space [103, 152]. This might be an outcome but there is no explicit provision for this to occur through the SP or Schedule X. Regardless of how much revegetation is done, there would still be a number of houses and streets across the upper slopes merging with more dense development below the Backdrop areas. I do not agree planting would raise the absorption capacity of the western slopes to a level where residential development would not be dominant. It is inevitable the ridge development would read as built-up urban, not open rural. This, in my view, means PPC28 does not preserve let alone enhance the distinctive values of this area.
203. Whilst the SP is based on detailed site analysis and respects a number of natural features and patterns and demonstrates a degree of sensitivity to the Site per se, the development as a whole does not reflect and express the unique identity of Nelson as stated by Mr Milne [103] or uphold its quality in my opinion.
204. Referring to Policy DO15.1.3, PPC28 would not retain the greenbelt function of the Malvern Hills ridgeline and the Maitai Valley. The current clear transition between urban and rural and the proximity of visual open space and rural landscape (acknowledging there is no as-of-right physical public access on the Site at present) would be lost.

Effects on Visual Amenity and Availability of (Visual) Open Space and Rural Landscape

205. A notable characteristic of Nelson city is the proximity of comparatively natural and open rural landscape, providing the immediate backdrop to the city and a readily accessed river valley in a pleasant rural pastoral/natural/forested setting, where there

is or could be some built residential development for rural living. This landscape is highly valued for its visual and open space amenity.

206. Urban encroachment/expansion into rural areas undermining or reducing ready visual and physical access to open space and rural and/or natural landscape character with high amenity value is an identified issue.
207. Infill development is preferred to urban expansion for compact urban form and to maintain a clear urban: rural boundary, with accessible open rural landscape close at hand. All of the Site has high amenity value that is readily accessed.
208. I agree that the Site is at a broad level subject to two viewing audiences:
 - Lower Maitai River and Kākā Stream Valley (people travelling on Maitai Valley Road (MVR) and using the recreational reserves along the Maitai River and of Botanical Hill, Branford Park, and Olive Hill; also, the outlook from the Cleveland/Atmore Terrace area which provides the access to Sharlands Hill recreational area, and from the track on Sharlands Hill). These views are more enclosed and intimate with a prevalence of woody cover and topographical complexity and are associated with the Maitai River. The Maitai Valley Road is the route to interior recreation areas including the Dun Mountain Range, and the Maitai River corridor is a popular and highly valued recreation area.
 - The west side of the Malvern Hills ridge (central Nelson city and port area, people travelling along SH6, enjoying the active coastal margin and Nelson Haven/Boulder Bank, the northwest suburbs). In these views the hills are the very open and exposed seaward facing backdrop and open upper slopes to coastal suburbs on its mid to lower slopes and coastal plains strip.
209. Parts of the Site common to both viewing audiences are the Malvern Hills summit ridgeline/skyline and Kākā Hill. The southwest end of the Malvern Hills ridgeline and Kākā Hill and a portion of the ridgeline north of Kākā Hill are the parts of the Site particularly relevant to central Nelson and are associated with the immediate green and open backdrop of Botanical Hill and Sir Stanley Whitehead Park, framed by Sharlands Hill to the right (south) which has a mix of residential suburbs on its base slopes, rough regenerating mixed exotic-native shrubland and plantation forest cover.
210. A Visual Amenity effects assessment is contained in Section 5.2 of the LVAUD. The first part of the visual effects assessment is a rating of the degree or magnitude of change. I have carried out my own analysis of the magnitude of visual change, which I have summarised earlier in my evidence. I have reviewed the RMM visual amenity effects assessment which I record in the table following. As with the landscape change table above I have used the same viewpoints the RMM assessment used for assessing

effects. I have then recorded the LVAUD's conclusion on the level of adverse effect, followed by my own conclusion with reasons.

Viewpoint	Rating of Degree of Adverse Effect	Discussion
Maitai Valley Road	LVAUD Low-Moderate My range Low to High	The LVAUD assessed the degree of adverse effect on visual amenity to be Low-Moderate. The presence of vegetated hillsides (including off site), and the envisaged mosaic of clustered housing separated by areas of open space on the steeper side slopes were considered to be mitigating factors, along with logical extension of urban development along the road up the hill. There is also an assumption that there would be no skyline effects. Some of the skyline and prominent ridgeline areas are not marked as primary ridgeline in the SP. The proposed rule to prevent buildings protruding through the skyline would not apply. My opinion is that the degree of adverse visual amenity effect would vary depending on viewpoint. A Low degree of effect is highly reliant on off-site vegetation, where there would otherwise be views of the Site. Where there are more open views into the Site the effect is more likely to be High in degree, due to the very obvious intrusion of urban development into what is currently a quiet comparatively undeveloped rural valley. The permitted baseline development would change that character but is not comparable to urban development like that provided for by PPC28 with its associated visual effect of traffic, activity and lighting. In particular, the development on the lower slopes of Kākā Hill would be prominent and the distinctive legible knobby landform would be partially masked and be extensively modified by earthworks. The development on the western side of the valley and along the ridgeline would also constitute a marked change from rural to urban. The Open Space Zones would retain and enhance visual amenity values, assuming the envisaged ecological restoration and improvement of freshwater habitat is achieved, including along the Maitai River. The long-term enhancement of Kākā Hill would be a significant positive effect on visual amenity.
Maitai Valley Recreational Spaces	LVAUD Low-Moderate My range Low to High	The LVAUD assessed the degree of adverse effect to be Low-Moderate. The mitigating factors were the degree of existing vegetation and landform screening out views into the Site, as well as vegetation that would grow on the Site in the Open Space zones; the permitted baseline development; and the dominance of open vegetated slopes. My opinion is that the degree of adverse visual amenity effect would vary depending on viewpoint. A Low degree of effect is highly reliant on off-site vegetation, where there would otherwise be views of the Site. Where

		there are more open views into the Site the effect is more likely to be High in degree, for the reasons described above. People in these views would be moving at a slower pace through the landscape on foot or bicycle, and at times would be stationary contemplating the view, from seats for example. The effect on visual amenity may be more pronounced.
Ralphine Way	LVAUD Low-Moderate to Moderate My rating High	The LVAUD assessed the degree of adverse effect on visual amenity to be Low-Moderate to Moderate. Mitigating factors were proximity of potential additional rural living development, and the expectation that dwellings would be clustered separated by areas of open space and a greenbelt around the top of the hills. My opinion is that the degree of effect would be High from here, where people value the open rural landscape. There is no greenbelt across the top of the Malvern Hills ridgeline; this is all proposed for residential development. I agree that there would potentially be rural living development adjacent, but this is not comparable to urban development on small urban sections where there is no ability to undertake rural activities. There would also be considerable visual disturbance from traffic, night lighting and general activity.
Cleveland/Atmore Terrace Area	LVAUD Low-Moderate My range Low-Moderate to Moderate-High	The effect on visual amenity from this area was considered to be adverse to a Low-Moderate degree. Mitigating factors were seen to be close proximity to the city so that the new development appears as a logical extension of existing development, spreading through the valley floors; and retention of Kākā Hill and other parts of Kākā Stream valley in a predominantly vegetated state. I agree that the degree of adverse visual amenity effect would be Low-Moderate in lower elevation views overall now that the development has been pulled down lower on Kākā Hill, but not for the same reasons. The visibility of the development would be more oblique and limited in these views. In higher views, the degree of adverse effect would increase to Moderate-High due to increased visibility overall of urban character and undesirable ridgeline effects at the far north end of the valley. At a more specific level, the effect on Kākā Hill would be Moderate. The legibility of the lower “knobby knee” knoll and its overall integrity would be lost, masked by housing and most likely removed by earthworks modifications in order to build housing and roading.
Botanical Hill, Sir Stanley Whitehead Walkway	LVAUD Very Low to Low My rating	The effect on visual amenity from these viewpoints was considered to be adverse to a Very Low to Low degree due to the close proximity to the city so that the new development appears as a logical extension of existing development, spreading through the valley floors; with retention of most of Kākā Hill’s green open character and most of the Kākā Valley’s green open character. new

	Moderate, possibly Moderate-High	development would be similar in elevation to that seen around Ralphine Way and is contained within the RuHDSH area, as anticipated by the FDS. My view is that the degree of visual amenity effect would be Moderate, possibly Moderate-High to people who highly value the existing relatively open rural character of the mouth of the valley. This is because the development seen is of an urban density incomparable to rural living, with a corresponding visible increase in traffic and night lighting. The legibility of the lower “knobby knee” knoll and its overall integrity and the legibility of the terracing would also be lost, masked by housing and most likely removed by earthworks modifications in order to build housing and roading.
Nelson City Centre, incl. SH6 between Marina and Walters Bluff	LVAUD Very Low to Moderate Note Positive for south end My rating Neutral	LVAUD assessed degree of adverse effect to range from Very Low to Moderate. Moderate effect was due to the potential appearance of houses on the sky/ridgeline above Davies Drive. This will no longer be the case if the Walters Bluff shoulder is included as a primary ridgeline and there are no house permitted to protrude above it. For the remainder of PPC28 affecting the south Malvern Hills ridgeline, as this would be Open Space. I agree that the effect would be Positive, or more likely Neutral as it would maintain the status quo. It is claimed that the Open Space zoning would be more protecting than the Rural zoning, which I accept, as plantation forestry and rural living uses would be precluded.
Port of Nelson, Marina	LVAUD Low to Moderate My rating High	LVAUD assessed the degree of adverse effect on visual amenity to be Low to Moderate despite a Moderate to High magnitude of change. This was because it was considered the urban development would appear as infill and at similar elevations to the existing development, as extensions to existing development, and the lower density of the Backdrop/Skyline area and vegetation requirement would mitigate. It was also stated that development would likely occur in clusters separated by vegetated open space. My opinion is that the degree of adverse effect would be High inevitably due to the transformation of an open undeveloped ridgeline to urban residential. The lower density in the Backdrop area would not make much difference to this outcome as many houses would still be visible across the ridge sides and would be incomparable to the few houses that might eventuate with rural living on 15ha lots. I have commented previously in my evidence consistency of character with existing development. The replacement landscape character may have a high degree of visual quality per se if good design can be achieved with lots of planting, but it cannot address the fundamental loss of openness and rural character which are critical to the high amenity especially of the Kākā Valley. Even under controlled status, there is also

		potential for some skyline/ridgeline effects especially in the short term. Avoidance of development on the skyline areas would give certainty of maintaining a clean sky/ridgeline. These areas would be better assigned to Open Space Zoning.
SH6, Coast between Boulder Bank and Walters Bluff	LVAUD Low-moderate to Moderate My rating High	The effect on visual amenity was assessed as ranging from Low-Moderate . This was because it was considered the urban development would appear as infill, as extensions to existing development, and the lower density of the Backdrop/Skyline area and vegetation requirement would mitigate. My opinion is that the degree of adversity would, inevitably, be High due to the total loss of openness, and a moderate loss of natural character and visual coherence (assuming a reasonable degree of revegetation with a noticeable presence of indigenous species through the Backdrop areas; and some consistency in building location and appearance). The replacement landscape character may have a high degree of visual quality per se if good design can be achieved with lots of planting, but it cannot address the fundamental loss of openness and rural character. Under controlled status, there is also potential for some skyline/ridgeline effects especially in the short term. Avoidance of development on the skyline areas would give certainty of maintaining a clean sky/ridgeline. These areas would be better assigned to open space zoning.

211. Overall, in my opinion, despite the high level of agreement on landscape values the LVAUD has understated the degree of adverse visual amenity effect. This is primarily because the transformation of existing open rural landscape character to built-up urban character, albeit at lower densities in some places, is regarded as an adverse change of no more than Moderate degree and often of Low degree. The loss of openness is considered to be Minor [110]. A lower degree of adverse effect is premised on the development being seen as a logical expansion and infill across the Malvern Hills west side, and as a logical incursion into the inland Maitai/Kākā Valley, coupled with an assumption that the Site has been “tagged” for urban expansion with adequate absorption capacity. As set out above, I do not agree that this premise is correct, or relevant.
212. There is also an assumption that by preventing buildings protruding above the ridgeline/skyline in the Backdrop/Skyline areas, applying design controls and applying the 20% vegetation coverage rule, this would maintain the existing attributes of openness and dominance of landform and vegetation on the undeveloped ridgeline. The 3-4 potential dwellings associated with the permitted baseline would not affect these attributes to the same degree. Another repeated assumption is that development

across the side slopes would occur in pockets and not sprawl over the slopes but there is no actual provision for this. I have previously commented on these two assumptions.

213. There would be positive visual amenity effects derived from the “green/blue enhancements”. These are likely to be low to start with but may become high over time, if the envisaged outcomes are achieved. These would not be able to negate the adverse effects on visual amenity due to urban development in my opinion, however.

Skyline/Backdrop Areas

214. The Landscape Overlay and the replacement Backdrop/Skyline areas are the most sensitive areas and are vulnerable to adverse change through residential development on them. This is regarded as a major threat (DO9.i). Particular regard is to be had to protecting the amenity of these areas.
215. The LVAUD has assumed that all development would be below the skyline and ridgelines in the Backdrop/Skyline areas, where residential zones cover these areas. As I have noted before, the Primary Ridgeline which now includes the Walters Bluff shoulder, does not include all the skylines and prominent shoulders on the east side of the ridge, as viewed from the southeast. Skyline effects may still occur.
216. Even if buildings and other non-natural elements do not break the skyline, there will be urban landscape character along the upper slopes close to the crest, in the Backdrop areas and in the non-Backdrop (but still sensitive) areas of upper slopes and prominent spurs on the east side. This would result in adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity of a Moderate-High to High degree in my opinion depending on how much is seen for any particular viewpoint. Mr Milne is of the view that the fundamental shape and form of the ridge would not be changed by PPC28 [94]. I agree that the broad ridge form would at a crude level be retained. It would not read as a greenbelt or open natural green ridgeline and Backdrop/Skyline, however. If all that mattered was protecting the overall form, the Backdrop and Skyline Overlays would not be needed.
217. I agree that there would be positive effects on landscape character and visual amenity where skyline and backdrop areas are within open space zones or the rural zone. In particular Kākā Hill’s sensitive upper slopes would benefit from the proposed conservation-oriented land use and strong control on any buildings. The landscape values of Botanical Hill and the ridge north of it towards Walters Bluff would also be affected in a positive way.
218. There would be adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity of a High degree from the proposed residential development within the south Malvern Hills basin as experienced from Branford Park and Olive Hill. The high degree of openness

and moderate-high natural character and visual coherence would be reduced and there would potentially be skyline effects as the prominent knoll at the top east of the main ridge is not marked primary ridgeline. This area reads as part of Branford Park and Olive Hill more than Kākā Valley and in my opinion the entire basin should be zoned as open space for recreation use and restoration of ecological values. If the basin was able to revegetate into forest, the existing track/proposed road would be able to be visually screened so that it is subservient to landform and vegetation.

Seaward Facing Slopes

219. Part DO9.1.4 states particular regard should be had for the protection of the visual amenity of seaward facing slopes (whether they are in the CE or not). My conclusion regarding the effect on the visual amenity of the Malvern Hills western slopes was that it would be adverse to a High degree.

Loss of Public Views from Open Ridgelines

220. There is currently no public access to the Site so no existing public views would be lost. The Malvern Hills ridgeline crest is proposed to carry a public road and trail/footpath corridor. Referring to the site photo record in the PLDD Report, this route provides excellent expansive views to the west, over the coast to distant mountains, as well as inland to hill ranges. Residential development zones are draped over the ridge. There is potential for buildings and planting to obstruct views. In my opinion a broad swathe of open space containing the transport corridor would best protect the visual values of the ridge and optimise the value as a recreational space whilst at the same time protecting the open ridge/skylines in views from below.

Loss of or Degradation of Views from Major Transport Corridors

221. The views from SH6 along the Nelson Coast have been addressed in the section on visual amenity effects. The PPC28 development would not result in any loss of views but it would result in degradation of the views.
222. The Maitai Valley Road is not a major road in and out of the city, but it is an important route to the interior where there is a plethora of recreational opportunities, and for scenic driving. The PPC28 development would not result in any loss of views from this road but it would result in degradation of the views.

Significant Views

223. Referring to Table 9.1, Significant Views are looking east along Hardy Street, Bridge Street, Halifax Street, Montgomery Square, and Buxton Square. The focus of these views are the hill/skylines generally, Botanical Hill, and Kākā Hill. The aim is to retain

the views of the hills as green belt/open space, as visual relief to the urban area, and the natural landform skylines and vegetated character.

224. These views would not be lost or degraded. There would be a Neutral to Positive effect of Low degree in my opinion.

Gateway Landscapes

225. Policy NA2.3.5 in the RPS is to avoid development which detracts from the landscape and amenity values afforded by viewshafts within the urban area and by gateways between urban and rural areas and between different landscape units.
226. I consider the lower Maitai Valley to be a gateway landscape as previously described and shown on my Fig. 5. The proposed urban expansion would detract from this landscape and would undermine its function as a gateway landscape.

Significant Landscape

227. The proposed SP maps the Backdrop and Skyline Areas as overlays and proposes bespoke rules to assist with managing effects of urban development and roading within those areas.
228. There is no complementary mapping of the Maitai Valley Visual Amenity Landscape defined in the 2016 Nelson Landscape Study as an overlay, with a set of bespoke principles and rules to ensure its key elements and attributes are protected and enhanced. A considerable portion of the urban development PPC28 would enable is located within the significant landscape including the High Density and Commercial centre. The key elements and attributes have been described in my earlier section. It is inevitable that urban development as outlined in the SP would not maintain or protect the values conferred by this landscape. The blue/green aspects would contribute to the values of the landscape.
229. Moreover, in my opinion the 2005 landscape classification is the more accurate one, in which the whole of the Site is within significant landscape for amenity value. It is inevitable that urban development of the type and scale proposed would not sustain the values of those landscape identified, as fundamentally the open undeveloped character creating a scenic picturesque inland valley would not be retained or replaced by a landscape of similar or better rural character.
230. Mr Milne states [149] that the existing Kākā Valley while undeveloped has limited “natural” appeal other than dominant landform, and presumably this would also apply to the Malvern Hills west side. He goes on to say that a framework of structure planting enabled by PPC28 SP would better reveal the ‘natural bones’ of this environment and thus enhance landscape character. The limited natural appeal at present is largely due

to the recent large-scale clearance of vegetation leaving bald landform and unnatural patterns and exposing tracks to view, and to sprayed-dead conifers on Kākā Hill. The expanses of gorse present some three years ago gave a more natural character to some degree and would have supported regeneration to more natural shrublands and forest.

231. I cannot see any revealing of the natural patterns of the landscape in the SP to the degree that would result in enhanced natural character throughout Kākā valley, or over the west Malvern Hills. I am not aware of any provision that would ensure that outcome: this would have to be by way of a guiding detailed plan expressing the natural pattern.
232. I agree that landscape character and natural character would improve over the Rural zoned areas through ecological restoration and in the Open Space zones in the southern parts of the valley.

Significant Natural Features

233. Mr Milne states [19] that there are no significant natural features on the Site. No significant natural features have been identified in the Nelson landscape studies per se however the Maitai River is a central element of the significant amenity landscape of the Maitai valley. In my view Kākā Hill as a whole is a Significant Natural Feature, as it is distinctive and can be easily defined. It is the largest of the distinctive conical landforms in the area and has an intriguing form. It supports significant indigenous vegetation. It has high visual value both resulting from its visual character and its prominence in views from the city and coast, and from a number of inland viewpoints including many related to recreational use. It is a macro landscape feature contributing strongly to the natural setting of Nelson. I understand its summit area is waahi tapu.
234. As an entity the PPC28 proposal would retain the overall integrity and value of Kākā Hill, and over time with ecological restoration its values would increase. The proposed residential zoning better respects the landform around the base, but it would still mask and most likely remove part of the distinctive knobby knee closest to Ralphine Way. This effect would be avoided if the zoning was moved off the spur of the knob and restricted to the debris fan areas so that it is *sympathetic to or complements* the feature (NA2.7.2). This would better protect landform legibility.

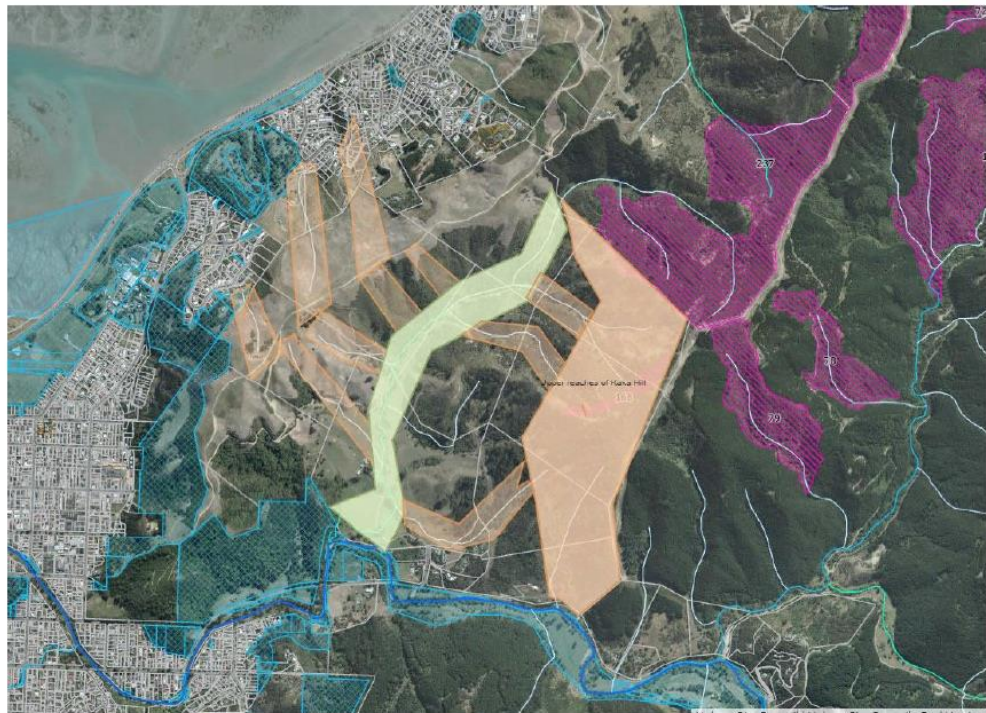
Preservation of the Natural Character of the Coastal Environment

235. In my opinion the western side of the Malvern Hills Ridge between the point just south of Walters Bluff where the ridge bends away from the sea to face more to the southwest, and the Dodson valley is part of the CE for reasons explained earlier.
236. The development enabled by PPC28 would not preserve the natural character of the ridgeline and protect it from inappropriate subdivision use and development. Urban

development would cover most of the ridgeline removing the essential remaining attributes of high openness (relative absence of development) and natural landform. There is virtually no natural vegetation cover left, which has the effect of enhancing landform legibility. In the LVAUD Report at [102] states that the revegetation would offset the effect of development such that on balance the reduction in natural values would be to a moderate degree. To some extent the proposed development recognises and protects potential enhancement opportunities through the vegetation that would result from the 20% native revegetation requirement and the small areas of open space towards the south end. It is disingenuous however to place much value on the revegetation of bare land when the recent clearance has caused the starkly bare state. It is unlikely that the land would be retained in this very bare state if not for the PPC28 process.

237. The recommendation by NCC through the Further Information Request for several biodiversity corridors from the ridge to the lower boundary to promote hills to coast connections have not been integrated. Urban development as proposed would preclude this potential to a large degree.

Appendix 2: Recommended biodiversity corridors



238. DO9.1.4 requires also that particular regard be had for the protection of visual amenity values in relatively unmodified parts of the CE. My conclusion regarding effects of visual amenity of the western Malvern Hills ridge is that it would be adverse to a High degree. The LVAUD concluded an adverse effect of Low to Moderate degree.
239. NA5.3.1 requires the protection of the natural character of coastal margins where scenes or landscapes of regional significance within which water forms an essential

component or simply where there are amenity values of regional significance. In views across Nelson Haven water is an essential component of the view of the Malvern Hills as immediate backdrop to the coast; and the Backdrop/Skyline areas constitute regionally significant landscape. The PPC28 proposed zoning would not protect the natural character.

240. DO7.1.5 requires that sprawling or sporadic subdivision and development shall be avoided within the CE and explains that appropriate subdivision and development is to be encouraged in areas where natural character has already been compromised. The CE part of the Site has had its natural character compromised by recent clearance and prior to that – to a lesser degree - by excessive pest plant cover following on clearance of original native forest cover for pastoral use. Built development and earthworks which have modified the mid to lower parts of the ridge. Future development should occur within these areas as infill or intensification.
241. At present the open undeveloped ridgeline is a clear cap to upwards expansion. There are no urban areas at present that rise higher than 100-150m altitude.
242. In my view the spread of urban development up and over the ridgeline is “escaped” urbanisation and constitutes sprawl. Whether it is dense or less dense, well vegetated or not, or clustered or uniform it would still be sprawl breaching the containing effect of the elevated ridge. It is also not “infill” or consistent with the existing residential areas as stated in the LVAUD report [107] as previously explained.

Natural Values of the Site (excluding CE)

243. This section relates to the natural values in an ecological sense (“naturalness”). Mr Milne states [147] *... a key component of the proposal is the proposed revegetation of the Rural zoned land in combination with the Open Space zoned land, and this will be the realisation of the potential natural character (and landscape) value encapsulated within the PPC28 site. Essentially PPC28 will enable the restoration of the values (natural character, ecological diversity) of a currently degraded pastoral land use.* His view is that overall, the natural values of the Site would be improved [22].
244. The LVAUD states [102] *Overall, the PPCR will preserve and in some instances enhance the natural values of Kākā Valley, Kākā Hill and Botanical Hill. With regard to Malvern Hills, the PPCR will reduce the natural values of Malvern Hills upper slopes by a moderate degree.*
245. The development is described to the greatest extent as possible preserving all existing landscape features and landscape qualities [105]. This includes:
- situating Kākā Stream, the Maitai River and two wetlands within the Open Space Recreational Zone

- retaining the existing Rural Zone over Kākā Hills upper slopes (with a Revegetation overlay)
 - situating Botanical Hills backdrop and skyline area within the Open Space Recreational Zone
 - identifying two areas of Kanuka and a mature Kahikatea tree to be protected.
246. Specific assessment of effects on freshwater habitat, water quality and terrestrial ecosystems and wildlife is outside my area of expertise except where these aspects affect landscape character and amenity values.
247. I largely agree that the collective “blue-green” aspects of the SP would improve the natural values of the Site and thus its landscape character and associated amenity values, providing there is clear provisioning within Sch. X to ensure the stated aspirations and intent would be embedded in the detailed subdivision scheme plans. The almost complete protection of Kākā Hill and upper parts of Kākā Stream valley with the revegetation overlay is a significant positive aspect of PPC28 although there is an issue of landform degradation around the base as described earlier. The Backdrop provisions for indigenous revegetation would also help restore natural values over the recently cleared area.
248. Not all natural features have been recognised and integrated into the SP such as the wet seeps discussed earlier. I understand from Mr Haddon that there are several indigenous tree and shrub species of note in a patch of mature shrubland on the west side of Kākā Stream valley within a residential zoned area, including *several mature Titoki and a large Pukatea, Lemonwood, a mamaku, and Seven Finger Pate*. This vegetation and other indigenous vegetation identified by Mr Robertson²⁰ as being potentially removed as part of residential development now appears to be part of the Vegetation Overlay but I am uncertain as to the purpose and intended outcome of this Overlay.
249. The most obvious feature that is not integrated into the plan as a natural feature is the terraced area at the confluence. Around half of this highly legible landform would be removed through High Density housing development on artificially built-up ground.
250. I have reviewed the cross-sections and detail plan for the Kākā Stream/Maitai confluence area including the proposed realignment. With regard to preserving the natural character of rivers and their margins, and protecting them from inappropriate subdivision use and development, my view is that PPC28 development would largely result in positive outcomes. This is not surprising given the degraded state of Kākā Stream at present due to pastoral land use and loss of indigenous riparian vegetation.

²⁰ Annexure A Indigenous Vegetation Occupying Proposed Residential Area in the Evidence of Ben Robertson June 2022

The realignment could readily be designed to mimic the natural course (I do not have information on the natural course).

251. There is a risk of adverse effect on Kākā Stream’s natural character due to the location of stormwater treatment devices within the stream corridor. There are no specific details at this stage to enable that to be assessed. The location of a road close to Kākā Stream along with the proximity of urban residential development along most of its true left side would also have an effect on the experience of natural character and may affect natural functioning e.g., wildlife presence. The apparently uniform 40m width may be insufficient to contain the scale of “margin” plus buffer necessary to protect or in this case, meaningfully enhance natural character.
252. One aspect that has not been integrated into the SP is the network of biodiversity corridors recommended by the NCC as discussed earlier, particularly linking valley floor to the Malvern Hills ridge and the ridge towards the coast.
253. There would be positive effects to natural character from PPC28. However, this does not remove the fact that there are considerable adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity.

Rural Urban Boundary

254. Mr Milne’s view [25] is *a strong rural urban boundary will be reinforced and the key landscape values of the Maitahi valley maintained. Future residential development will be set within a strong rural backdrop, reinforcing the sense of place and sense of difference between the city and the valley.*
255. The blurring of the urban rural interface is a “major threat” under DO9.i. The retention of greenbelt areas is to maintain a clear rural: urban boundary. The greenbelt, and gateway areas, *emphasize a sense of arrival to, or departure from, the city.*
256. PPC28 does not sustain the existing strong urban: rural boundary set by the undeveloped character of the Malvern Hills. As stated earlier, urban development generally stops at the 100-120m contour, with small areas going a bit higher up to about 150m altitude. Branford Park and the Maitai River esplanade reserve at the narrow squeeze point between the south end of the Malvern Hills and Sharlands Hill provide a very clear transition from urban to rural, reinforced by the strong rural character of Kākā Stream valley just inland. The views of the more open rural and more natural landscape, dominated by Kākā Hill and framed by Olive Hill/Botanical Hill, through this gap from urban areas of central Nelson reinforces the clear boundary.
257. As stated earlier, the predominantly Rural zoning is important in maintaining the gateway landscape and clear land use boundary.

CONCLUSION

258. My overall conclusion is that whilst PPC28 would provide for some positive effects with respect to natural character and natural values, and through provision of public open space, the urban development that would be enabled would not maintain the amenity values of the significant landscape of the Kākā valley and lower Maitai valley and the Malvern Hills ridge. The natural character of the coastal environment would not be preserved. The particular open rural landscape character of the ridgelines and skylines would not be maintained or enhanced.
259. From a landscape character and landscape values perspective, the development enabled by PPC28 is not appropriate development for the Site.

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28 June 2022