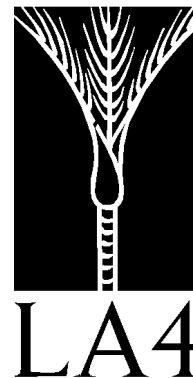


Memo

To: Ms Kate Madsen
Director
Paua Planning

From: Rob Pryor
Director | NZILA Registered Landscape Architect
LA4 Landscape Architects Ltd



Date: 3 June 2022

Gleeson Quarries – Huntly s92 Further Information Request: Landscape Review

Pursuant to section 92 of the Resource Management Act 1991, Waikato District Council has requested further information to continue processing the application.

This memo responds to the request for further information in regard to landscape matters.

Landscape and visual

6) *Since the Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects (LVE) prepared by LA4 was written, the PWDP-DV has been released. The LVE does not address the relevant landscape and amenity provisions of this document. Please provide an update to the LVE to include an assessment against the relevant landscape, natural character and amenity provisions of the PWDP-DV and confirm (if appropriate) that the conclusions reached in the LVE are unchanged.*

Response:

The statutory context was covered fully in the application based on the (then current) Waikato District Plan ('WDP') and was subject to the Rural provisions under the Plan. The proposal was assessed against the key relevant landscape and visual objectives and policies in the WDP.

The relevant landscape and visual objectives and policies in the PWDP-DV are as follows:

GRUZ – General rural zone

Objectives

GRUZ-O1 Purpose of the zone.

...

- (3) Provide for rural industry, infrastructure, rural commercial, conservation activities, community facilities, and extractive activities;*
- (4) Maintain rural character and amenity;*
- (5) Limit development to activities that have a functional need to locate in the zone.*

GRUZ-O3 Rural character and amenity

- (1) Maintain rural character and amenity;*
- (2) The attributes of areas and features valued for their contribution to landscape values and visual amenity are maintained or enhanced.*

GRUZ-O4 Extractive activities

Recognise the contribution of extractive industries to the economic and social well-being of the district

Policies

...

GRUZ-P3 Contributing elements to rural character and amenity values.

Recognise that rural character and amenity values vary across the zone as a result of the natural and physical resources present and the scale and extent of land use activities.

GRUZ-P6 Industrial and commercial activities.

- (1) *Provide for rural industry and rural commercial activities provided they are either dependent on the rural soil resource or have a functional or operational need for a rural location.*

...

GRUZ-P17 Management of extractive activities

- (1) *Provide for extractive activities provided that adverse effects are appropriately avoided, remedied or mitigated; and, where this is not possible, off-set or compensated.*

Commentary:

With respect to the matters addressed in these objectives and policies, I note as follows:

- i) The proposed activity has a functional need to locate in the zone.
- ii) The proposal provides for rural industry and extractive activities.
- iii) The rural character and amenity values of the site are not high as a result of the natural and physical resources present and the scale and extent of existing land use activities.
- iv) The site and its surrounding rural landscape (other than the Waikato River) are not high in landscape value. It is a distinctly modified environment through past and present land use including quarrying, mining, farming, forestry, and rural residential lifestyle activities. The landscape values and visual amenity of the Waikato River will not be adversely affected by the proposal.
- v) The proposal would contribute to the economic and social well-being of the district
- vi) The relatively restricted visual catchment, existing landform and vegetation patterns would mitigate any adverse effects on the existing rural character and ensure that the amenity values of the surrounding area would be maintained.
- vii) The completed state of the fill areas would be integrated into the surrounding landscape, in keeping with the appearance, form and location of existing rural character and amenity values.
- viii) The scale, intensity and duration of effects of the filling activities would be compatible with the amenity and character of the locality.

NATC – Natural character

Objective

NATC-O1 Natural character

...

- (2) *The natural character of wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins are protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*

Policies

...

NATC-P3 Protecting the natural character of wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins.

- (1) *Protect the natural character qualities of wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins from inappropriate subdivision, use and development by:*

- (a) *Ensuring that location, intensity, scale and form of subdivision, use and development are appropriate;*
- (b) *Minimising, to the extent practicable, indigenous vegetation clearance and earthworks disturbance;*
- (c) *Encouraging any new activities to consolidate within, and around, existing developments or, where the natural character and landscape values have already been compromised, to avoid development sprawling; and*
- (d) *Requiring appropriate setbacks of activities from wetlands, lakes and rivers.*

Commentary:

With respect to the matters addressed in these objectives and policies, I note as follows:

- i) The site and its surrounding rural landscape are not high in natural character. It is a distinctly modified environment through past and present land use including quarrying, mining, farming, forestry, and rural residential lifestyle activities. The natural character values of the Waikato River will not be adversely affected by the proposal.
- ii) The proposal would not result in a loss of dominant vegetation cover or clearance of indigenous bush cover contributing to the overall aesthetic coherence of the area.
- iii) The proposed activity will be consolidated within, and around, existing developments where the natural character and landscape values have already been compromised and will avoid development sprawling.
- iv) The site does not contain, and the proposal would not visually compromise, any significant landscapes and features. The site and surrounding area, while containing a degree of rural character are not high in landscape quality at a district level.
- v) The proposal is adequately set back and physically separated from the Waikato River.

NFL – Natural features and landscapes

Objective

NFL-O1 Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.

Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes and their attributes are recognised and protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

Policies

NFL-P1 Recognising values and qualities.

- (1) *Recognise and protect the attributes of outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes as set out in SCHED5 – Outstanding natural features and landscapes.*

Commentary:

With respect to the matters addressed in these objectives and policies, I note as follows:

- i) The proposal would not adversely affect the visual amenity values of the Outstanding Natural Feature identified in the WDP, defined as the ‘Waikato River and Wetlands’.

I therefore confirm that the conclusions reached in the LVE are unchanged and consider that the proposal is consistent with the intent of the landscape, visual, natural character and amenity objectives and policies of the PWDP-DV and when considered in totality is entirely acceptable in landscape and visual terms.

- 7) *In 2021, the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA) adopted new best practice guidelines for the assessment of landscape and visual effects. The Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (Final Draft) include the adoption of the following rating terminology and threshold:*

Very low	Low	Low-moderate	Moderate	Moderate-high	High	Very high
Less than minor	Minor		More than minor		Significant	

The LVE followed the recommendations and terminology of the previous guidelines and uses a seven-point rating system between negligible and extreme. While the rating definitions contained in the LVE are consistent with the NZILA's older practice guidelines, no indication is given as to where the ratings sit within the RMA notification threshold. Please provide a comparison table showing how the rating system used, compares with those included in the table above.

Response:

The following seven-point scale was used in the LVE to rate effects, based on the (then current) guidelines contained within the NZILA Best Practice Guide – Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 2010:

Negligible | Very Low | Low | Moderate | High | Very High | Extreme

Negligible Effect

The proposal would have no effect on the receiving environment.

Very Low Effect

The proposal has discernible effects but too small to adversely affect other persons.

Low Effect

The proposal constitutes only a minor component of the wider view. Awareness of the proposal would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene or create any significant adverse effects.

Moderate Effect

The proposal may form a visible and recognisable new element within the overall scene and may be readily noticed by the viewer. The proposal may cause an adverse impact but could potentially be mitigated or remedied.

High Effect

The proposal forms a significant and immediately apparent part of the scene that affects and changes its overall character. The proposal may cause a serious adverse impact on the environment but could potentially be mitigated or remedied.

Very High Effect

The proposal becomes the dominant feature of the scene to which other elements become subordinate and it significantly affects and changes its character. The proposal causes extensive adverse effects that cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Extreme Effect

The proposal is completely at odds with the surrounding area and dominates the scene to an extreme degree. The proposal very significantly affects and entirely changes the character of the surrounding area. The proposal causes extreme adverse effects that cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

The following table shows how the rating system used, compares with those included in the table above.

<i>Negligible</i>	<i>Very low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Very high</i>	<i>Extreme</i>
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<i>Less than minor</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>More than minor</i>	<i>Significant</i>
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Since the release of the guidelines LA4 have accordingly revised their rating scale as follows:

Very Low | Low | Low-Moderate | Moderate | Moderate-High | High | Very High

Very Low Effect

No appreciable change to the visual character of the landscape, its landscape values and/or amenity values.

Low Effect

Limited change to the visual character of the landscape, with a low level of effect in relation to landscape values and/or amenity values.

Low-Moderate Effect

Evident visual change to the visual character of the landscape with a low to moderate level of effect in relation to landscape values and/or amenity values.

Moderate Effect

Appreciable change to the visual character of the landscape with a moderate level of effect in relation to landscape values and/or amenity values.

Moderate-High Effect

Marked change to the visual character of the landscape with a moderate to high level of effect in relation to landscape values and/or amenity values.

High Effect

Significant change to the visual character of the landscape with a high level of effect in relation to landscape values and/or amenity values.

Very High Effect

Fundamental change to the visual character of the landscape with a very high level of effect in relation to landscape values and/or amenity values. The proposal causes significant adverse effects that cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

<i>Very low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low-moderate</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Moderate-high</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Very high</i>
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<i>Less than minor</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>More than minor</i>	<i>Significant</i>
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I trust that this satisfactorily responds to the s92 request.



Rob J Pryor
Registered NZILA Landscape Architect
DIRECTOR

