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Via email: Kim.Smith@rotorualc.nz

Dear Kim

## **Pukehangi Plan Change – Landscape Provisions Technical Advice**

Boffa Miskell Ltd have provided technical landscape advice at various stages to Rotorua Lakes Council in the development of the Pukehangi Plan Change. The undersigned has been asked to provide a technical opinion on key landscape matters raised by submitters. The following does not form an independent landscape assessment of effects however provides recommended methods that can be applied to address specific landscape focused submissions.

### **Background**

In November 2017 the undersigned prepared a Landscape Planning Peer Review Advice letter for Rotorua Lakes Council's Landscape Architect, Melanie Cameron. The review provided a recommended approach that considers key aspects identified in earlier technical assessment reports for the District and Caldera Rim<sup>1</sup>. A design approach to consider a land use change to the site was provided with a number of Landscape Planning principles set out.

This advice letter set out the need for preparation of technical assessments to inform the design process, including a landscape and visual assessment report.

In March 2019 Boffa Miskell Ltd, including the undersigned, prepared a landscape and visual effects assessment (LVA Report) considering the proposed structure plan effects<sup>2</sup>. The development of planning provisions has drawn from the assessment which set out key outcomes sought to be retained and managed<sup>3</sup>.

The undersigned has also provided advice to the project team preparing the recommended set of planning rules relating to landscape management methods.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer Page 2, Landscape Planning Approach Peer Review Advice, Letter Dated 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Refer Pukehangi Heights Development Area Structure Plan, Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment, Boffa Miskell Ltd, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Refer Page 15 of LVEA Boffa Miskell Ltd, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

## **Scope of Advice**

The following advice considers key methods for addressing submitter concerns and draws from methods identified in the earlier advice. The advice is desktop based and has not investigated on site the matters raised from individual submitters.

## **Key Submission Landscape and Visual Matters**

As addressed in our earlier correspondence the submissions surrounding landscape and visual effects matters for the Pukehangi Plan Change relate to:

### **Landscape Effects**

- Loss of rural character and rural outlook
- Loss of rural amenity
- Change in landform (earthworks)
- Interface with Pukehangi Parklands Estate
- Concerns surrounding density and that it does not achieve the aim of the 2012 Rotorua Caldera Rim Rural Character Design Guideline.

### **Visual Effects**

- Application of Lakes A reflectivity rule for high caldera areas.
- Restrictions to building reflectivity values of 37%.
- Restriction of building heights to prevent blocking of views for Pukehangi Parklands Estate Inc and other neighbouring properties.
- Reduction of streetlight glare.

## **Landscape Effects Submission Advice**

Landscape Effects have been considered in the landscape and visual effects assessment and takes into regard the Caldera Rim Rural Character Guidelines and the intent of managing rural and rural residential development on the slopes of the caldera. The assessment considered the capacity for the area to accommodate an urban land use change and provided direction for managing the interface between the rural landscape and urban landscape.

The analysis of the site also considered the areas that should be protected from urban and rural residential development along the caldera and ensures the protection of the caldera rim feature. The LVA report identified the landscape as having a moderate degree of sensitivity with a moderate degree of change. Methods to respond and integrate urban growth into the landscape and considering of the wider Rotorua Caldera Rim and localised rural context resulted in the assessment of an overall low to moderate adverse landscape effect.

Integrating urban and rural residential development into this area has been founded on the natural landform features, existing patterns of development and the interface with residential development. The sensitive areas of the site have lower density proposed within alongside provisions for increased vegetation cover to provide landscape integration with Pukehangi Parklands.

Equally the approaching to zoning focuses on minimising disruption to the natural landform of the mid site escarpment and integration of revegetation to visually connect with Parklands Estate's vegetated character and adjoining residential development.

There will be an immediate loss of rural amenity attributed with the site, however at a broader scale the character of the caldera rim feature will be maintained. The change in character will occur as a result of the proposed plan change, however this is not in itself inappropriate in my opinion given the context of the site and its placement adjoining the existing urban development. The broader urban and rural landscape character and the interface have been considered and integrated into the proposed plan change.

### **Visual Effects Submission Advice**

Managing visual effects of urban develop interplays with the interpretation of character and visual amenity. Submitters have identified alternative methods to address their concerns. Managing building form, colour, height, density, vegetation and earthworks are all methods of managing character and visual amenity within a landscape.

### **Reflectance Values**

Landowners within Parklands Estate seek that the Parklands Estate standards apply to the plan change area and note that reflectivity standards apply across the entire Parklands Estate.

A reflectance value of 25% is commonly used in rural environments to visually integrate built form into the landscape. The proposed rules provide for a RV25% be applied for fencing and retaining walls for the Escarpment Transition Areas 1 and 2 and the mid site escarpment. These are the most visually prominent areas of the site to the wider visual catchment and it is important that they do not present visually prominent or dominant built forms and structures that are incongruous with the landscape.

In my opinion a RV of 25% for roofs and 37% for walls in these areas could be accommodated to provide a clear connection with the approach applied to Parklands and in response to the sensitivities of the mid escarpment.

In my view the following could be considered to provide continuity with the adjoining residential and rural residential development and rural landscape:

- **Lower Terrace** – no RV restrictions
- **Mid-site escarpment, Upper Terrace and Transition Areas 1 and 2** – 25% roofs, fences and retaining walls, and 37% for walls and joinery.

### **Street Light Glare**

Street lighting in sensitive areas of the escarpment have the potential to introduce adverse visual effects in the evening. Minimising this potential adverse effect are born out of subdivision design, through road design, and surrounding vegetation and subdivision allotment design. An approach to sensitive areas is to ensure street lighting remains subservient to the building form and eventual vegetation heights within the area. These effects however can be addressed at subdivision design and

consenting and through the landscape and visual assessment reporting at these stages. It is recommended that street lighting be considered in the assessment of landscape and visual effects for the subdivision.

### **Restriction of Building Heights**

The consideration of building heights being restricted to enable views from existing development within Parklands is coupled with the submission to consider future vegetation that may restrict views to the northeast.

Within the subdivision view shafts are provided for under Policy 1.4. However, it is noted the intent for views remains secondary to the need to visually integrate the mid site escarpment development with vegetation cover. The balancing of vegetation with built form and integration with the character of adjoining development, both urban and rural residential, has in my opinion a suitable rule framework to guide subdivision design to enable this.

The assessment of landscape and visual effects for subdivision will be required to consider the potential visual effect of proposed subdivision controls including building height, colour and form, and vegetation, on the visual amenity of the viewing catchment. This will include but not be limited to visual outlook for adjoining landowners. This is not to set an expectation that any visual change is adverse, the key matter will be to what degree the change and the provisions considered for the subdivision generate adverse visual effects.

In response to the sensitive mid site escarpment and adjoining buffer zones building controls have been identified in the plan change to guide development in the sensitive transition zones and the mid site escarpment. These include restricted building heights of 6m, density, reflectivity (including recommended adjustments in this letter), fencing, earthworks and vegetation. The inclusion of 6m controls alongside a landscape and visual assessment is, at this stage, suitable for highlighting the sensitivities of the site alongside considering the visual effects at the time of subdivision. I do not consider further height restrictions are required for the proposed plan change.

### **Building Form – Roof Design**

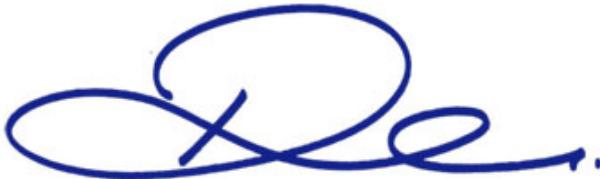
Controlling roof design at the plan change stage is a greater level of detail that will be addressed at the subdivision consent stage. A5.2.3.4.4 provides for a landscape assessment for the sensitive areas of the site, where roof design, would influence the visual effects of the proposed subdivision. At A5.2.3.4.4 iv) the landscape and visual assessment will provide for design controls which, in best practice, would include building design controls that address form, colour, height, layout etc.

In my opinion the subdivision design approach will be responsive to a landscape and visual assessment and is where design controls will be addressed.

In summary the technical landscape advice provided by Boffa Miskell Ltd has guided the proposed plan change to respond to the landscape sensitivities and characteristics of the site and its adjoining urban and rural residential development. The methods for managing visual effects can, as addressed above, be amended and also addressed at the time of subdivision in further detail.

Yours faithfully

**BOFFA MISKELL LTD**



Rebecca Ryder

Landscape Architect | Associate Partner



cc: Craig Batchelar, Boffa Miskell Ltd.