

Te Whanganui-ā-Orotū (Ahuriri Estuary and Former Lagoon)

The former lagoon, Te Whanganui-ā-Orotū, is an expansive and open landscape that contains subtle former shorelines and islands. It has significance to tangata whenua and is an essential part of Napier's history, pre and post earthquake.

Page 74 Napier Landscape Study | Draft
for Consultation

LANDSCAPE CONSIDERATIONS – Hawke's Bay Airport Limited



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The airport is important to Hawke's Bay, however it sits with Te Whanganui ā Orotū which is identified as a Special Character Landscape in the Isthmus Landscape Study. It is appropriate that the airport sits within the Special Character Landscape but the characteristics which are identified as requiring consideration need to be addressed through the planning framework.

The sensitivities in the proposed Special Character Landscape relate primarily to -

- Ecology and ecological connection
- Connection to the proposed Special Landscape Features within Te Whanganui ā Orotū

It is recommended that there are two landscape consideration areas that require detailed assessment criteria -

- 1. Development area adjacent to the State Highway and the Watchman Road/Westshore Wildlife Reserves**
- 2. Development area to the west of the runway**

And in order to provide connection between the airport site and the Special Landscape Features there are two areas where viewshaft protection is considered appropriate.

- 1. State Highway to the north of the entrance to the airport**
- 2. Entry to the airport from Watchman Road**

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to undertake a review of the Napier Landscape Study, Draft for Consultation - 13 Feb 2023, and other relevant documents as they relate to the Hawke's Bay Airport to determine whether there is opportunity to develop a bespoke planning framework which enables the airport to -

- Continue to operate and function as an airport
- Recognise that the airport is acknowledged in the Regional Industrial Land Strategy (Draft May 2020) and is an important part of the Napier urban fabric and economy

This review identifies the important landscape considerations so that these can developed into a planning framework.

This report is not a detailed or granular assessment of the landscape in which the airport sits it simply seeks to draw on and make conclusions from the existing information.

2.0 Methodology

The importance of the landscape in which the airport is located has been considered in many documents. This review seeks to summarise the key attributes of this landscape so that these can be adequately acknowledged in any proposed planning framework.

In order to make recommendations a review of the following documents was undertaken –

- Draft Regional Industrial Land Strategy for Napier City and Hastings District Council, May 2020
- Hawke's Bay Airport Ltd Submission 24 September 2023 (Stephanie Murphy)
- Napier Landscape Study – Draft for Consultation 13 February 2023 (Isthmus)
- Draft Napier District Plan Natural Features and Landscape chapters (Napier City Council March 2023)
- Draft and **Confidential** Hawke's Bay Airport Notice of Requirement (Mitchell Daysh October 2020)

3.0 Document Review

3.1 Draft Regional Industrial Land Strategy for Napier City and Hastings District Council, May 2020

The Regional Industrial Land Strategy (RILS) for Napier City and Hastings District Councils is the first joint industrial strategy initiative. It has a 30 year horizon and recommends specific actions to enable the effective and efficient industrial development.

Section 4.2. (pages 50 – 57) of the Regional Industrial Land Strategy includes background and recommendations in relation to the airport.

The strategy notes that 254ha is zoned Airport (210ha) and Deferred Airport (44ha). RILS acknowledges the sensitivity of the location in which the airport is located and also acknowledges the importance of this activity for the region.

Section 4.2.8 (RILS) makes a number of recommendations in relation to the airport activity but importantly it acknowledges that the airport should provide “a clean and attractive outlook for the region” with specific consideration being given to “outdoor storage, landscaping and carparks, and building design.”



Figure 5 - Airport industrial zones

Figure 1 – Airport Industrial Zones RILS, Page 50

3.2 Submission by HBAL on the Draft Napier District Plan

The Hawke’s Bay Airport Ltd (HBAL) have made a comprehensive submission to the Draft Napier District Plan, Airport Zone.

Point 4 and Point 9 (below) of the HBAL submission relate to landscape and require specific consideration in this report.

Point 4 HBAL Submission

Draft Objective Reference

The Airport is maintained as an attractive gateway to the city and achieves a high standard of amenity reflective of the role and function of the airport and its setting within the landscape known as Te Whanganui ā Orotū, as well as its proximity to the Ahuriri Estuary, Watchman Road Reserve, Westshore Wildlife Reserve and the Westshore Residential area.

The HBAL has queried the appropriateness of including the Airport within the Te Whanganui ā Orotū landscape unit. HBAL also considers that the objective should remove reference to the Westshore residential area. The Airport is offset from this area by both the State Highway and the railway network, both of which affect the amenity of this area well before any amenity effects arise from the airport. The airport is further offset by the Ahuriri Estuary, Watchman Road.

Point 9 HBAL Submission

Draft Policy Reference

Maintain and enhance the public transport network and air traffic safety, whilst maintaining the character and amenity of the airport zone, the gateway to the airport, Te Whanganui ā Orotū landscape, the ecologically sensitive areas of the Ahuriri Estuary, Watchman Road Reserve and the Westshore Wildlife Reserve and the Zone interfaces by managing:

1. *The height, bulk and location of buildings and structures*
2. *The type of materials used for roof surfaces*

3. *Noise and light emissions*
4. *Traffic movement, access, loading and parking*
5. *Infrastructure and stormwater*
6. *Screening of outdoor storage and refuse storage areas; and*
7. *Setbacks of buildings from zone boundaries and from ecologically sensitive areas*

The HBAL submission contends that this policy is confused and contains too many elements. Needs to be broken into separate parts. The policy should be focussed on managing the adverse effects of the airport development **by incomplete**

3.3 Napier Landscape Study, Draft for Consultation, Isthmus (Feb 2020)

Isthmus have prepared a Draft Napier Landscape Study. The purpose of this document is to -

- **Describe and evaluate** Napier’s landscapes
- **Identify** any Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, Special Features and Landscapes, or Areas of Outstanding or High Natural Character
- **Recommend measures** for the proposed District Plan based on potential risks to landscape values (valued characteristics and qualities) and opportunities to enhance such values

The following is considered to summarise the key matters in relation to the landscape in which the airport is located.

The saline plains of Te Whanganui ā Orotū (the former lagoon with its former shoreline feature and islands) are considered to be one of the five main landforms that make up Napier City. The assessment notes that the Waohinganga/Esk River and Tūtaekuri both formerly converged on Te Whanganui ā Orotū.

It is noteworthy that to Te Taiwhenua Te Whanganui ā Orotū is considered to have outstanding landscape value within Ahuriri and the ecology of the saline plains and the salt marsh/meadows dominate Napier’s significant natural areas.

The uplift associated with the 1931 earthquake led to the loss of the Ahuriri lagoon and the formation of a new landscape consisting of “islands in a sea of pasture”.

There are a number of landscape features within Te Whanganui ā Orotū including Western shoreline (including Poraiti), Heipipi – Esk Hills, Roro-ō-Kurī, Te Iho-ō-Te-Rei (Quarantine Island), Keteketerau, Tapu-te-Ranga (the Watchman), Pukeiohiohio, Puka, Te Umuroimata (Park Island) and Tapu te Ranga.

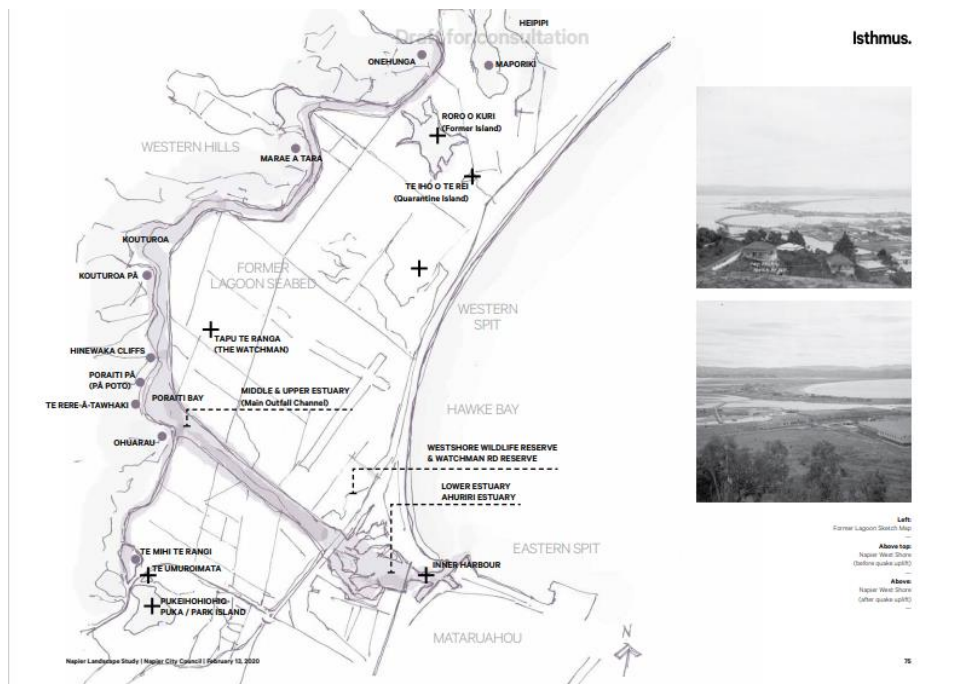


Figure 2 –Page 75, Napier Landscapes Study|Napier City Council|February 13 2020, Isthmus

Te Whanganui ā Orotū landscape is made up of a number of landscape features. The Isthmus report concludes that it is not natural enough to be considered an Outstanding Natural Landscape. It is a landscape worthy of being classified as a Special Character Landscape.

“The Whanganui ā Orotū landscape - taken as a whole – is not natural enough to be considered an “Outstanding Natural Landscape”. It contains the airport and its associated business park, other infrastructure and fringes of urban development. While the significance of Te Whanganui ā Orotū to mana whenua contributes to its landscape value , such cultural significance would primarily be recognised by the “Sites of Significance to Māori” workstream under other sections of the RMA.

The Te Whanganui ā Orotū landscape is relatively sensitive to development because of its legibility and unity depends on contrast between the features and an open, uncluttered plain. Potential threats to legibility of the plain include plantations, compartmentalisation with shelter belts, and urban development. It is recognised that there may be conflict between maintaining landscape values and economic use of the area. For that reason, the following areas are identified as priority parts of the landscape:

- *The northern part of Te Whanganui ā Orotū including Keteketerau, the Beacons, Roro-ō-Kuri, Ihu-o-Te Rei, and the adjacent part of the western shoreline and connecting former lagoon sea-floor*
- *South-western corner of Te Whanganui ā Orotū, including Pukeiohoihoi, Puka and Te Umuroimata (Park Island). Taipo Stream, Ohuarau Pā, Poraiti Pā (Pā Poto), Hinewaka Cliffs, Tapu te Ranga (the Watchman) and the connecting former lagoon seafloor and outfall channel*
- *Outlook to the Western Hills form the Hawke’s Bay Airport*
- *The ERI report identifies key opportunities to enhance the natural values within Te Whanganui ā Orotū*
- *Restoring the natural ecotone between the undeveloped section of shingle spit at Keteketerau/Beacons and the remnant salt marsh west of SH2*

- *Improving ecological conditions within the Ahuriri Estuary (including the outfall channel), restoring natural margins along the Taipo Stream, and restoring natural connections along drainage reserves to Anderson Park.”¹*

The Napier Landscape Study recommends classifying the Te Whanganui ā Orotū as a **Special Character Landscape** and recommends classifying the features within including Ohuarau Pā, Poraiti Pā, (Pā Poto), Heipipi, Roro-o-kuri, Te Ihu-ō-Te-Rei (Quarantine Island), Keteketerau, Tapu te Ranga (the Watchman), and Pukeiohiohio-Puka-Te-Umuroimata (Park Island) as **Special Character Features**.

3.4 Draft (Confidential) Notice of Requirement, Airport Designation Hawke’s Bay Airport Limited (HBAL), Oct 2020

The HBAL has drafted a Notice of Requirement (NOR) for a Designation for Airport Purposes. The purpose of the designation is to set in place a more efficient and flexible planning method to allow for the use of the Airport land in a way that properly reflects evolving development and infrastructure requirements. The most common mechanism is a designation which is complemented by underlying zone provisions.

“5.5 Landscape

Isthmus Group Ltd has prepared a draft Napier Landscape Study (“the Study”) to assist NCC with the proposed plan review. This study has identified the entire airport site as being located within the Te Whanganui-ā-Orotu Special Character Landscape. The small area of leased farmland located to the north of Turfrey Road is partially located within the Keteketerau Special Character Feature.

The Te Whanganui-ā-Orotu Special Character Landscape makes up a significant 3800 hectares of Napier’s non-urban landscape and is largely comprised of the uplifted and reclaimed (drained) land. While the study describes the features that form part of the Te Whanganui-ā-Orotu landscape , it primarily focuses on the Ahuriri Estuary, with limited consideration given to the wider landscape, including the uplifted lagoon within which the airport is located.

As part of the Proposed Plan review process, HBAL provided feedback to NCC regarding the Study. More specifically, HBAL sought that a finer grained mapping analysis be undertaken of the character areas and features, and that specific values of each be defined. HBAL also sought recognition that the Airport, as a significant piece of infrastructure, being located within these areas.”²

The Airport Masterplan is described in the Notice of requirement “as an indicative roadmap of potential future development plans at an airport, based on projected airport growth and other needs at the time it was prepared.”³

“It is important to note that a Master Plan is a reasonably high level document that covers a wide range of spatial scales and timeframes. This type of Master Plan is not intended to be viewed as a rigid blueprint and landuses at the airport inevitably evolve over time.”⁴

¹ Page 88, Napier Landscape Study | Napier City Council | February 13, 2020

² Page 36, (Draft and Confidential) Hawke’s Bay Airport Limited - Notice of Requirement (Oct 2020)

³ Page 12, (Draft and Confidential) Hawke’s Bay Airport Limited – Notice of Requirement (Oct 2020)

⁴ Page 15, (Draft and Confidential) Hawke’s Bay Airport Limited – Notice of Requirement (Oct 2020)

The NOR includes reference to both the SNA report and the Isthmus Napier Landscape Study prepared as part of the process of developing the Draft District Plan. This is reflected in the submission to the Draft District Plan, and whilst the airport acknowledge that the airport is located within Te Whanganui ā Orotū HBAL is suggesting that this broadscale assessment does not adequately acknowledge the airport as it stands, or its aspirations as set out in the 2040 Masterplan.



Figure 3 – Hawke’s Bay Airport 2040 Master Plan

3.5 Draft Napier City Council District Plan Draft Zones – Natural Features and Landscape, and Airport

The Natural Feature and Landscape Zone and the Airport Zone are drafted to reflect the draft Napier Landscape Study. However, the Landscape Study has been prepared at a broad scale and the Hawke’s Bay Airport Limited in their submission has requested that the policies are simplified and more focussed on managing the effects. Hawke’s bay Airport Limited have also queried the appropriateness of the airport being located within the Te Whanganui ā Orotū Special Character Landscape.

4.0 Conclusion

The airport occupies a small part (254ha) of the proposed Te Whanganui ā Orotū (3800ha) - Special Character Landscape and for the most part the airport site is already highly modified and intensively developed. Within the airport land holding there are existing proposals for airport expansion and associated business park development. The airport is acknowledged in several of the documents reviewed as being and integral part of the Hawke’s Bay urban fabric and economy.

The sensitivities in the proposed Special Character Landscape relate primarily to -

- Ecology and ecological connection
- Connection to the proposed Special Landscape Features within Te Whanganui ā Orotū

To ensure that these aspects are adequately acknowledged requires that the airport site is integrated into the wider site.

Watchman Road and the Westshore Wildlife Reserves provide a transition to the Westshore Residential area and anchor the Hawke’s Bay Airport to the eastern side of Te Whanganui ā Orotū, the most intensively developed part of the Special Landscape Area.

The challenge in any planning framework is to acknowledge that the airport is an important part of the regional economy, which has been for some time (and continues to be) located in a sensitive landscape.

4.1 Recommendations

- This report concludes that it is appropriate for the airport to be included in the Te Whanganui ā Orotū Special Character Landscape. Whilst the airport is highly modified – it still forms part of Te Whanganui ā Orotū. The challenge is to ensure that any further development on the airport landholding does not have an adverse effect this Special Character Landscape.
- From a landscape perspective it is important that the planning framework differentiates between the landscape considerations which are related to amenity internal to the site, and those which acknowledge that the airport is located within a proposed Special Landscape Area.
- This review supports the approach that the significance of this landscape to mana whenua be addressed in the Sites of Significance to Māori workstream under other provisions of the RMA.
- It is recommended that a development footprint/precinct/design guidelines which encourages higher density/larger footprint/higher buildings towards the centre of the site, integrates ecology throughout the site and seeks to improve the overall landscape outcomes. Viewshafts from within the site should be maintained to establish and maintain visual connection to the Special Landscape Features identified within the wider Te Whanganui-ā-Orotū area.

This is different but aligned to the Masterplan which the airport have prepared which focuses on activities. The footprint/precinct plan should have a specific focus on ensuring that the development integrates into the special landscape in which it is located.

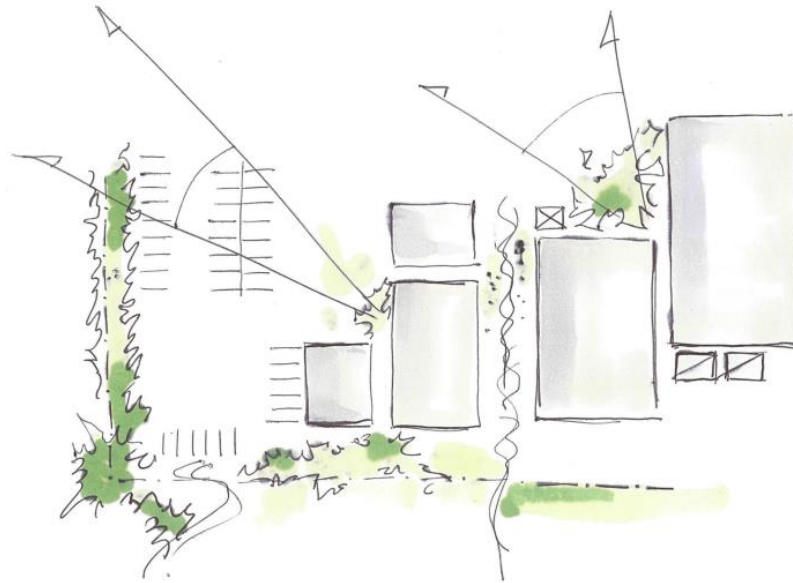


Figure 4 – Suggestion of how landscape considerations could be addressed in design guidelines (plan view NTS)

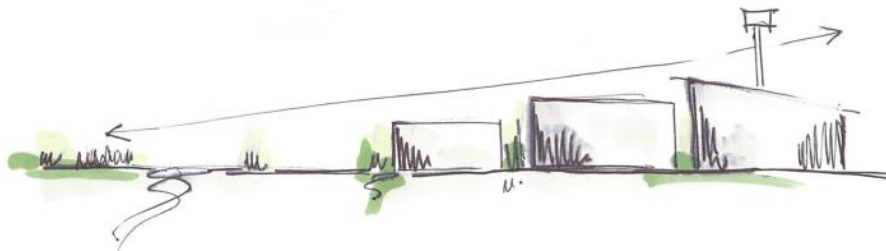


Figure 5 - Suggestion of how landscape considerations could be addressed in design guidelines (cross-section NTS)

The following are recommended as key considerations in any proposed planning framework-

- Building setbacks 5m min (suggestion of 30m setback seems excessive given what has been identified as special about the landscape)
- Building bulk and location and height controls (set a gross floor area beyond which requires a consent with consideration of the following – maintains connection to the adjoining Special Landscape Features, does not have an impact on adjoining ecology/makes a natural transition etc)
- Location of activities are such that a transition is made between the built environment and the saline plains e.g. carparking and stormwater management (Low Impact Urban Design Solutions)
- Earthworks no discernible impact on the saline plains -design and rehabilitation
- Consideration of the development of a colour palette

It is recommended that there are two landscape consideration areas (Refer Figure 6 below) that require detailed assessment criteria -

3. Development area adjacent to the State Highway and the Watchman Road/Westshore Wildlife Reserves

Consideration of a reduced building height (to make a transition to the centre of the airport site), planted buffer and planting integrated into the site is desirable. Whilst outside of the airport site – this part of the state highway is an entrance/exit to the city and the airport and

is therefore worthy of special consideration to ensure the amenity is maintained and a strong connection to Te Whanganui ā Orotū preserved. i.e. a blunt/harsh interface would not be a good outcome

4. Development area to the west of the runway

The significant area of blue (on the airport masterplan) – Airport Buffer and Future Airport Development requires consideration. A softening of this boundary is desirable noting that this is the interface between the airport site Te Whanganui ā Orotū. This could be managed with planting/planted buffer which also acts to address potential stormwater management issues.

And two areas that require protection of view shafts (Refer Figure 6 below)

3. State Highway to the north of the entrance to the airport

This is the area where more stringent controls could apply to the identified commercial development area between the State Highway and the airport. For example a slightly reduced building height and viewshafts maintained to the Special Landscape Features shown in Figure 7. The viewshafts to the Special Landscape Features (through the airport) is an important consideration to provide the desired connection. There should not, be an expectation that these views are protected in the entirety, but strategic glimpses and connection would be beneficial.

4. Entry to the airport from Watchman Road

As you enter the site from Watchman Road it is desirable for views to be maintained and enhanced to the southwest. It will not be possible to protect all views and viewshafts and as you head towards the terminal parallel to the State Highway maintenance of internal site amenity will be important to the airport and important to the city. This is the area that will create a real sense of entry. Continuation of greenspace either side of the access roadway would be a good outcome and a 5m planted buffer would be highly desirable. This would be dual purpose. It would create the sense of entry and also screen potential commercial development.



Figure 6 – Landscape Consideration Areas and Viewshaft Protection areas