

Memorandum

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Attention:	Mark Geddes
Company:	c/- Grey District Council
Date:	8 December 2023
From:	Rhys Girvan
Message Ref:	Barrytown Mineral Sands Mining Project: Landscape Peer Review Addendum – Submissions
Project No:	BM230199

Introduction

1. I have been engaged by Grey District Council (Council) to peer review technical landscape related matters arising from the Barrytown Mineral Sands Mining Project resource consent application. This application seeks to establish a mineral sand mine in an area of approximately 63 hectares over a 12-year period at 3261 Coast Road along the Barrytown Flats (the Site).
2. Prior to receiving the submissions through notification, I prepared a Peer Review, dated 21 September 2023 of the Revised Landscape and Visual Assessment prepared by Glasson Huxtable Landscape Architects, dated 5 July 2023 which supports the application (the Revised Assessment).
3. This memorandum provides an addendum to be read in conjunction with my Peer Review having now reviewed the summary of submissions provided by Mr Geddes, Consultant Planner appointed by Grey District Council to consider those submissions which relate to my area of expertise. To assist the reader, I have identified references to individual submissions which have been discussed and included a link to each of these accessed from Grey District Council's website as a footnote.

Qualifications and experience

4. My qualifications and experience are set out in my memorandum dated 21 September 2023. I can confirm I will comply with the Code of Conduct in preparing this addendum and while giving oral evidence before Council Hearings. The issues addressed are those within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from my expressed opinions.

Issues raised by Submitters

5. Of the 357 submissions received following notification, I identified that 96 submitters raised 167 submission points with relevance to landscape, natural character and visual effects. 94 of these submitters are opposed and two are in support. There were a wide variety of issues, and for ease, I have summarised the topics as follows:

a. Landscape character effects: encompassing effects on relevant amenity values, aesthetic values, aesthetic coherence and natural beauty;

- b. *Adverse effects on the natural character of the coastal environment including the natural and wilderness values of Pakiroa Beach;*
- c. *Visual effects from adjoining dwellings, Pakiroa Beach, SH6, and parts of the Paparoa and Croesus Tracks. Concerns include effects on scenery and scenic values including visual pollution and night-time lighting effects.*
- d. *Appropriateness and effectiveness of the proposed roadside bund as mitigation;*
- e. *Effectiveness of Rehabilitation*

6. In addition to the above, the submission of Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand¹ considers the AEE provides insufficient documentation of consultation with Ngāi Tahu and requests a Cultural Impact Assessment to be completed prior to the application progressing. The submission of Te Rūnanga or Ngāti Waewae² identifies support for the application subject to adoption of refined resource consent conditions dated 4 September 2023 and reserves the right to consider proposed consent conditions identified by Council Reporting Officers to advise the Hearing Panel.

a. Landscape character effects: encompassing amenity, aesthetic values, natural beauty and sense of wilderness

- 7. 64 submission points refer to landscape effects. These also encompass effects on aspects of amenity and aesthetic values, aesthetic coherence and natural beauty and relate to overall effects on landscape character. A further 44 submission points refer to associations with the West Coast Regional Council branding which refers to the 'West Coast's Untamed Natural Wilderness', with a further six submission points referring to the Great Coast Road and its recognition as one of Lonely Planet's Top 10 Roads.
- 8. As outlined in my Peer Review, the Revised Assessment identifies there will be **low adverse** landscape character effects during operation, primarily due to the short timeframe of the operation, the graduation of effects across the Project (largely dependent on when and where the mining activity is occurring), and the ability for rehabilitation to occur.
- 9. In terms of landscape value, the Site has not been identified as an Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape in the Operative or Proposed Grey District Plan. Whilst amenity values relating to landscape values form other matters for which the mine must be assessed under RMA s7(c), landscape and visual effects are to be considered within the context of the physical effect on the locality for which the mine is proposed³. The Revised Assessment identifies the broader and varied natural, rural and coastal landscapes encompassing the characteristics and values encompassed in various submissions and describes the physical aspects and change within the Site.
- 10. Having reviewed the relevant submissions, I have not identified any further evidence to change my opinion as to the overall level of landscape character effects. I consider adverse landscape character effects will be slightly greater than identified in the Revised Assessment. I consider the Site's working rural context combined with the temporary and progressive nature of the proposed mining activity, including in the context of perceptual and associative landscape values raised through submissions, will result in **low-moderate** landscape character effects during operation which accords with **minor adverse effects**. I also consider adverse landscape effects have potential to be reduced through effective rehabilitation.

¹ [Submission 133](#)

² [Submission 222](#)

³ RMA, Schedule 4, Part 7(1)(b).

b. Effects on the natural character of the coastal environment including its untamed natural wilderness values

11. 17 submissions identify concerns with the natural character of the coastal environment⁴. A further three submissions refer to effects on the natural and wilderness experiences apparent along Pakiroa Beach. The Revised Assessment sets out further analysis of the existing and consequent natural character which will result from the proposal, including the majority of statutory matters through which natural character effects must be assessed⁵. The Revised Assessment does not identify the nature or level of natural character effects during operation and identifies that there will “*not be any adverse long-term effects on natural character*”⁶
12. The Revised Assessment identifies that the site sits between two areas which have higher natural character than the site itself⁷. In this context, I consider the extent to which concerns with natural character effects raised by some submitters remain valid, including potential adverse effects of natural elements and landscape features identified within the Application Area or Site. The nature or level of natural character and consequent natural character effects during operation have not been identified nor stated in the Revised Assessment, either within the Mine Disturbance Area, remainder of the Site or in the context of the broader coastal environment including areas with potential for higher levels of natural character.
13. Submissions have raised specific concerns in relation to Pakiroa Beach and Canoe Creek lagoons, both of which are located within the Application Area. The submission of Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand⁸ also highlights that Canoe Creek, which passes through the Application Area, is recognised as waahi taonga, cultural materials and traditional campsite. In this context, I consider the extent to which existing natural elements, patterns and processes contribute to natural character within and adjoining the Site and the extent to which natural character effects and opportunities for restoration will occur in these areas remains unclear.
14. I have reviewed the draft consent conditions dated 4 September 2023 included within the submission of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae⁹. Whilst I consider aspects addressing visual screening and planting generally accord with the Revised Assessment, they do not explicitly address natural character. In this regard, I consider draft consent conditions do not effectively maintain or enhance natural character in response to matters raised by submission and including preserving the natural darkness of the night sky and proposed rehabilitation requirements.
15. In general terms, I agree that natural character effects within the Mining Disturbance Area will remain relatively limited given the nature of existing modification apparent within this area. Beyond this, the Application Area includes parts of Pakiroa Beach and Canoe Creek as well as Canoe Creek Lagoon within which the levels of natural character effects or natural character effects is not stated in the Revised Assessment. The Landscape Mitigation Plan includes buffers of Wetland Mitigation Planting and coastal mitigation planting for visual screening. In this context, I consider the proposed pattern of planting often appears unresponsiveness to dynamic coastal processes including an ability to adapt to the natural movement of water as described.
16. Overall, I consider there are further areas and opportunities to promote enduring natural elements, patterns and processes and maintain, enhance and restore natural character in response to the proposed application. Furthermore, I consider submissions raise valid concerns as to the extent to which the proposed mine will interact with and respond to areas of higher natural character during operation which adjoin the Mine Disturbance Area. To this end, I recommend further conditions addressing appropriate management of natural character effects are adopted, including an opportunity to expand the overall areas where natural character is restored during operation if consent is granted, as discussed with Mr Geddes and incorporated within his Section 42A Report.

⁴ Concerned with RMA Matters of national importance: (a) *the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.*’

⁵ Omitting commentary on NZPCS Policy 13(2) f., places or areas that are wild or scenic. and Policy 14 (c) viii. restoring cultural landscape features;

⁶ Glasson Huxtable Landscape Architects, Revised Assessment (5 July 2023), page 36.

⁷ Ibid., page 34.

⁸ [Submission 133](#)

⁹ [Submission 222](#)

c. Visual Effects

17. 21 submission points raise concerns with visual effects. Concerns include visual pollution, effects on scenery and scenic values, and night-time lighting effects, including of vehicles within the Site and along SH6. Concerns with visual effects have been identified from four neighbouring properties, Pakiroa Beach, SH6 and from parts of Papamoa and Croesus Tracks.
18. In assessing visual effects, I have had the opportunity to observe the Site from a number of adjacent properties who have since raised ongoing concerns with visual effects and agree that some adverse visual and landscape impacts will occur, including from elevated areas relating to amenity and lighting impacts. I have not visited the property of G Broad¹⁰ who identifies views of buildings, lights, machinery, and the whole mine from their home. Having reviewed the submissions, I largely agree with the nature and level of visual effects from neighbouring properties as set out within the Revised Assessment and summarised in my Peer Review and have not identified any further evidence to change my opinion.

Views from the beach

19. The submissions of G Langridge¹¹ identifies that, "*the proposal will be visible from public area on Barrytown Beach*". The submission of Golden Sands Horse and Wagon Tours¹² describes "*the natural and quiet environment of the lagoons and beach front directly adjacent to the proposed mine site*" and refers to the visual pollution of mining equipment nearby. In response to submissions, I consider visual effects from the Pakiroa Beach foreshore have been adequately considered in the Revised Assessment. Beyond this I consider, any related concerns with impacts on natural character would be further addressed through provision of additional more responsive restoration of natural character during operation along this coastal interface as set out in paragraph 16 above.

Views from Papamoa and Croesus Track

20. The submission of R Squire¹³ refers to views from Croesus Track and sections of Paparoa Track. I note the Revised Assessment has considered visual effects from these areas as a desktop exercise only. I have not visited these areas for the purpose of confirming identified levels of effect at the time of providing this addendum however agree that viewing distance will likely ensure any adverse effects will be very low, where the broader panorama of the coastal environment and sea will be evident.

Lighting

21. Eight submissions refer to effects on visible night-time lighting, including effects on the dark sky. I have not considered any ecological effects of lighting including potential effects on the endemic Tāiko (*Procellaria westlandica*), as this is outside my area of expertise.
22. The submission of G and G Langridge¹⁴ identifies that, "*The area presently has very low levels of lighting, the dark sky is highly appreciated by residents*". Similarly, the submission of R Mirza¹⁵ considers, "*The dark sky at night is amazing*". The submission of G Broad¹⁶ states, "*At night, I see no lights from my property*".
23. The Revised Assessment identifies that lighting has specifically been designed to reduce the effect of the Project on the Tāiko and through adherence to Draft Consent Conditions which refer to the Australian Government's National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife January 2020 (or subsequent revision). In response to concerns raised through submissions, I support the careful consideration of any lighting effects specific to this landscape and to ensure the proposed application appropriately effectively manages potential adverse effects with respect to current best practice and

¹⁰ [Submission 324](#)

¹¹ [Submission 188](#)

¹² [Submission 357](#)

¹³ [Submission 198](#)

¹⁴ [Submission 188](#)

¹⁵ [Submission 90](#)

¹⁶ [Submission 324](#)

local conditions if consent is granted. To ensure conditions are effective, I consider these should also include reference to the natural darkness of the night sky within the coastal environment and as perceived from neighbouring properties.

d. Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Roadside Bund Mitigation

24. Adverse effects of and the effectiveness of the proposed roadside bund has been raised in four submissions.
25. The submission of Beachstones Partnership¹⁷, states: *“Everyone will know there is a large-scale mining operation on the other side of the bund”*. Similarly, the submission of K Gilbert¹⁸ states: *“...the idea of building a soil and vegetation stop-bank to prevent the unsightly mess of the operation being seen is simply hiding the inappropriate industrial site that it is.”* This submission continues, *“Driving beside an unnatural mound with a slow growing planted barrier, cuts out any view to the horizon, to the surrounding view across the lowland so the broad perspective of mountains to the sea, is lost.”* Conversely, the submissions of R Harris¹⁹ and B Reid²⁰ consider that roadside vegetation bunds will not hide visual impacts from houses located above the Site.
26. Having visited the Site and surrounding landscape including from neighbouring properties above SH6, I agree a mix of open and more enclosed views occur and result from existing areas of pasture and areas of regenerating, planted and established vegetation, much of which frequently frames and punctuates open views throughout this specific rural coastal environment. Whilst I agree panoramic open views towards the sea remain across the Site which will be disrupted by proposed bunding and planting, I consider the effect of bunds will principally be limited to transient views observed along the State Highway and have been assessed as resulting in low adverse effects in this context.

e. Effectiveness of Rehabilitation

27. The submission of R Williams²¹ considers, *“the rehabilitation and riparian planting plan is lacking, not leaving the site with any significant ecological benefits to counter the substantial environmental disturbance”*. Conversely the submission of I Reynolds²² considers, *“the area has limited biodiversity value and the rehabilitation will increase habitats”*. Similarly, the submission of S Leeuw²³ states, *“the habitat after the rehabilitation is likely to support a more diverse range of species than the current pasture”*. Whilst I acknowledge that Draft Conditions reflect visual screening and planting as outlined in the Revised Assessment, I consider deficiencies in response to relevant aspects of natural character remain. Furthermore, I consider rehabilitation requirements should further support measures to restore natural character within dynamic aspects of this coastal environment during operation and at completion alongside reinstatement of pasture and ongoing protection of effects from erosion and sediment generation.

Conclusion

28. Having reviewed relevant submissions, I consider the summary of landscape and visual effects as set out in paragraph 38 of my Peer Review remain. This takes account of the likely nature and level of adverse effects which occur within the locality and broader coastal environment, including natural character effects. I have not changed my view on the nature and level of identified effects. With respect to natural character, I consider submissions raise valid concerns which have yet to be addressed, both in terms of levels of effect during operation and in terms of opportunities for restoration of natural character during operation and which would contribute to effective rehabilitation.

¹⁷ [Submission 206](#)

¹⁸ [Submission 228](#)

¹⁹ [Submission 220](#)

²⁰ [Submission 254](#)

²¹ [Submission 182](#)

²² [Submission 109](#)

²³ [Submission 129](#)