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Flood Resilience: Pakowhai Pump Station Landscape Scoping

Summary

This Landscape Scoping Assessment has been prepared to identify the potential landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed Pakowhai Pump Station upgrades. Based on a site visit and review of the current concept design, it is considered that the proposal will result in Very Low adverse effects. This conclusion reflects the modified and operational nature of the receiving environment, the isolation from utilised public access links, and the absence of nearby residential receptors. The proposal also upgrades an existing pump station location, and will be read as part of an established pattern of river management infrastructure.

Accordingly, it is my opinion that the proposal does not give rise to significant adverse visual landscape effects, and therefore the preparation of a detailed Landscape Plan (as contemplated by Condition 24(2) of the OiC) is not required.

Purpose

Narrative Landscape Ltd has been engaged by Brian Perry Civil Ltd to undertake a Landscape Scoping Assessment for the proposed Pakowhai Pump Station. The assessment responds to Condition 24 of the Severe Weather Emergency Recovery (Hawke's Bay Flood Protection Works) Order 2024 (OiC), which requires:

- Identification of potential visual landscape effects, including effects on:
 - adjoining residential properties; and
 - the coastal environment; and
- Determination of whether those effects are 'significant', such that a Landscape Plan (i.e. fencing/planting) is required.

This report addresses the scoping function only, consistent with previous assessments prepared for HBRC flood resilience works.

Methodology

This assessment has been prepared by Josh Hunt, a Registered Landscape Architect (NZILA), and adopts a proportionate methodology, consistent with the NZILA Te Tangi a Te Manu Guidelines, but tailored to the scale and nature of the proposal.



The approach includes:

- Review of concept design information and consent strategy material
- Site visit undertaken on 6 April 2026
- Identification of key landscape and visual receptors
- Qualitative assessment of potential effects using a 7-point effects scale (**Figure 1**)

Very Low	Low	Low - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - High	High	Very High
Less than minor	Minor		More than Minor		Significant	

Figure 1: Effects rating scale.

The purpose of the assessment is to determine whether any effects are approaching a 'significant' threshold, rather than to undertake a detailed LVA.

Proposal

The proposed Pakowhai Pump Station forms part of the wider flood resilience programme under the OiC. Based on the current concept design (**Figure 2**), the key components include:

- A replacement pump station structure incorporating two fish-friendly pumps
- Associated discharge pipelines and outlet structure
- Localised earthworks and hardstand areas and access upgrades
- A new transformer and control room

The design seeks to limit above-ground infrastructure, with compact built form and efficient layout. The proposal replaces an existing pump station on the site, and therefore does not introduce a new land use or activity into the receiving environment. It is also noted that earlier design components (including fuel storage and additional generator structure) has now been removed, resulting in a reduced visual footprint and simplified built form.

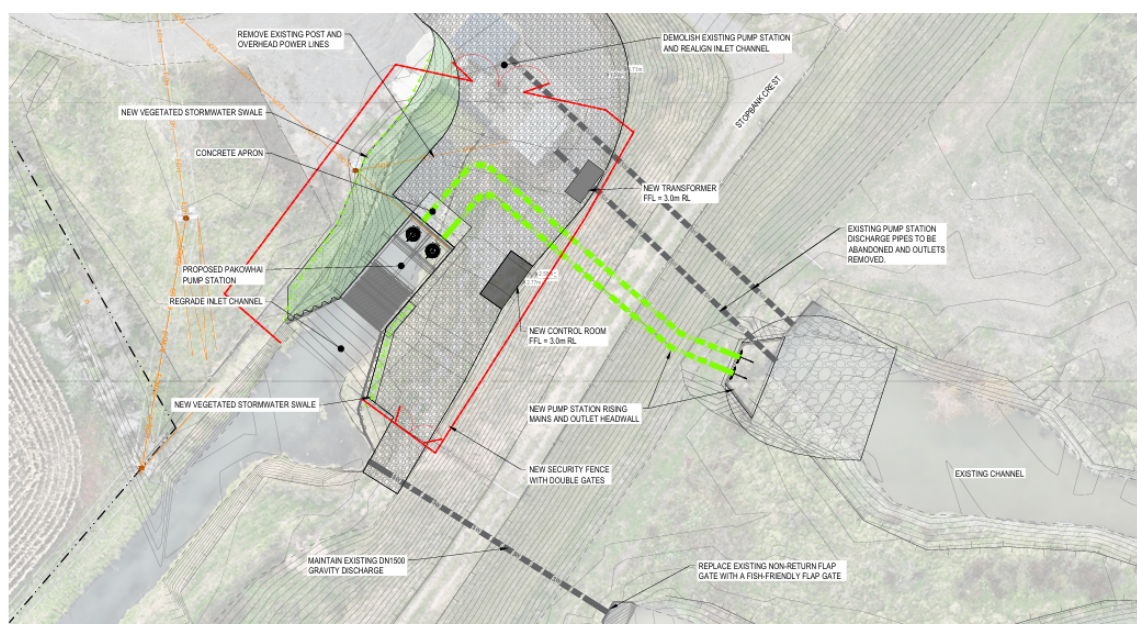


Figure 2: Proposed Pump Station Site Layout

Existing Environment

The Pakowhai pump station site (**Figure 3**) is located approximately 2.35km inland from the Awatoto Pump Station, positioned toward the narrow extent of land between the Tutaekuri and Ngaruroro Rivers, within the Plains Production Zone (under a River Hazard overlay). The site is accessed via what is legally defined as Scissons Road, although public vehicle access is currently restricted by the Regional Council. As a result, the site experiences very low levels of traffic and limited casual public use.



Figure 3: Proposed Pump Station Site Layout

The surrounding environment (**Figure 4**) is characterised by; stopbanks associated with both river systems (which define the edges of the landform and provide strong physical containment), flood-prone pastoral land beyond the stopbanks, productive rural land uses, including cropping land to the west (Bostock NZ, including centre pivot irrigation), and a plant nursery operating within a 'River Works' land parcel. The site itself is located within an established infrastructure setting, with an existing pump station already present.



Figure 4: Pump Station Site – Looking East toward the site, from the Tutaekuri Stopbank



Overall, this is a modified and functional landscape, with very limited amenity or experiential values. The combination of physical separation, restricted access, and enclosing stopbanks results in a low sensitivity receiving environment with a high capacity to absorb change.

Visual Effects

In considering potential effects, the key point is that the site is isolated, with no meaningful viewing audience. There are no; nearby residential properties with views toward the site, public roads providing passing views, or sensitive recreational use or visual audience (including cyclists or pedestrians) given the restricted access. While the stopbank crest could theoretically provide a viewing position, in practice this location does not function as a public viewing environment, and any views toward the site would be incidental and fleeting.

The proposal will be viewed, where at all, within the context of; existing pump station infrastructure, existing stopbanks, and surrounding productive rural land uses. In this context, the upgraded pump station will read as a limited and expected component of an already modified working landscape. Overall, I consider that potential adverse visual effects are Very Low, reflecting the limited visibility and absence of sensitive receptors.

Coastal/River Environment Effects

While the site is located between two river systems and within the broader coastal catchment, the immediate environment is highly modified and managed for flood control purposes. The proposal does not compromise the underlying natural character framework of the river systems (beyond what is already part of the receiving environment), is unlikely to result in notable changes to the ecological (biotic) patterns, and introduces only a localised and contained change to the experiential qualities of the site.

The enclosing stopbanks and lack of public access further limit the extent to which the proposal is experienced within the wider river or coastal environment. Accordingly, effects on the river and coastal environment are considered to be Very Low.

Conclusion

Overall, I consider that potential adverse visual effects are Very Low. Importantly, there are no residential properties that are likely to experience effects approaching a 'significant' threshold. Additionally, I consider that effects on the coastal environment would also be Very Low.

On this basis, the proposal does not give rise to effects that could reasonably be described as 'significant' under Condition 24 of the OiC. Accordingly, a detailed Landscape Plan is not required.



Appendix 1: Effects Scale

The following table outlines the scale of effects used within this assessment. It is noted that while the primary consideration is typically in relation to negative effects of a proposal, effects can also be neutral or positive.

Very High	Total loss/modification of key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. amounts to a fundamental change of landscape character or visual amenity.	Significant Effect
High	Major loss/modification or loss of most key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. substantial change to the pre- development landscape character or visual amenity.	Significant Effect
High-Moderate	Loss/modification of several key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. the pre-development landscape character or visual amenity remains evident but is distinctly changed.	More than Minor Effect
Moderate	Partial loss/modification to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. new elements may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape or views.	More than Minor Effect
Low-Moderate	Minor loss/modification to one or more key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. new elements are not prominent or uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape or views.	Less than Minor Effect
Low	No material loss/modification to key elements / features / characteristics. i.e. modification or change is not uncharacteristic and integrates seamlessly within the receiving landscape or views.	
Very Low	Little or no loss/modification to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. approximating a 'no change' situation that is barely discernible.	