

Memorandum

To: Shay McDonald, Consents Planner, Otago Regional Council
From: Rachael Annan, Principal Landscape Planner (4Sight Consulting - Part of SLR)
Date: 23 February 2023
Subject: Technical Review – Assessment of Landscape Effects for RM22.550, 21 Marine Parade, Tairei Mouth

SCOPE

This memo provides a brief peer review of the RM22.550 assessment of landscape effects (Mike Moore, 26/01/23).

This technical review work is subsequent to carrying out a site visit (30/11/22) and providing landscape related s92 RFI questions (6/12/2022) on the lodged consent application. The scope and focus of this review is defined by questions provided by the processing planner; set out as the following sub headings.

Is the assessment provided in the s92 response in accordance with Tuia Pito Ora/New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects best practice?

The assessment sets out an approach stating that it *'follows the concepts and principles outlined in the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA) Landscape Assessment Guidelines'*(p.3). At a broad level I agree with this statement. However, there are particular limitations including limited discussion of landscape attributes and that photographic viewpoints are provided without reference to camera focal length or viewing distances which would be comparative to what is observed onsite.

Although the assessment somewhat simplifies some issues, in essence it is in accordance with these guidelines.

In your opinion, does the Landscape Architect's report give adequate consideration to the proposed recreational/accommodation use of the structure and its potential effects on natural character?

The assessment set outs relevant natural character matters identified for the coastal landscape setting and provides a brief analysis of anticipated natural character effects of the application. I accept that the boatshed will not directly (physically) impact identified key natural characteristics of natural processes and landforms. I also recognise that the assessment acknowledges that the proposal will have an adverse natural character effect (very low) due to its 'greater scale and impact of built form'.

A new recreational (or commercial) boatshed would also potentially be proposed at a larger scale than existing boatsheds, and with a pitched roofline. The proposed cladding materials would be anticipated, with the exception of the extent of glazing.

However, I note that the key landscape factors of this proposal and the landscape assessment relate to both the natural environment *and* existing built form patterns. This is also illustrated by policy identifying landscape values being recreation and fishing use. This matter is further addressed below response to the following question.

Do you agree with the conclusions reached relating to effects on visual amenity, natural character, and landscape? If you disagree, please explain why.

I disagree with the conclusions reached regarding effects rankings and set out below the points of disagreement (regarding the rationale which these conclusions are based on).

Firstly I consider that the assessment draws some overly generalized conclusions regarding existing landscape character.

I agree with the broader descriptions of the landscape setting, However, I consider that the way in which the assessment groups together consideration of the boatshed and nearby residential areas is a problematic basis to the assessment.

I disagree with the setting's *absorptive landscape capacity* being afforded by the presence of Tairei Mouth residential dwellings. The waterfront boatshed row is distinct with regards to its appearance, character, and role. These are the very factors which do make the existing boatshed row a local focal point.

The assessment viewpoints also illustrate the boatsheds physical separation (as a group) from local residential dwellings. If the proposal goes ahead, viewpoints will afford a direct and legible view of the distinctive factors of the proposal, i.e. the combination of its larger scale and waterfront residential character (as viewed from across the river) among the boatshed row. This would be of particular concern at night, given the potential 'glowing box' appearance afforded by indoor lighting spill (considered a notably different effect from any spotlight effect associated with fishing activity).

There are also conflicting statements made regarding the character and amenity of the existing boatshed row.

At page 5 the assessment states that '*The small scale, utilitarian, fishing industry structures (and associated clutter of fishing gear) are of some interest but do not contribute to natural character or aesthetic coherence*'. However, in contrast to this statement, the assessment notes that '*the waters edge structures and moored boats are an element of visual interest and something of a focal point*' (p.6).

I consider that the existing boatsheds are representative of recreational and fishing values identified by the planning framework.

Finally I note the way in which these matters inform the assessment conclusions reached.

The assessment notes that there is no '*baseline protection of the existing fishing port character*' (p.12). However, I note that the identified fishing and recreation landscape values do and should inform an development response as arrived at through a landscape assessment process. The appropriate outcome being the effective and appropriate integration of a development in *this* setting.

The proposed boatshed's gabled building form more generically reflects boatshed form of other New Zealand locations. However, I acknowledge these generic design mitigation factors of the pitched roof form and recessive exterior cladding colouring. While the author notes this as a positive aesthetic contribution to visual amenity, he does this in comparison to the visual amenity of other areas. I note that amenity involves experience of perception of a landscape character (it's compilation of particular characteristics – that make a place distinct).

My key concern is regarding the inference that the level of waterfront glazing set out by the proposal is appropriate on the basis of it being '*common to see boat sheds with various levels of accommodation / residential use provided for all around New Zealand*' (p.12). I note that are two steps taken in drawing this conclusion are that:

- (1) the residential boatshed use of *other* locations is considered to make this development approach appropriate, and
- (2) the solidly glazed frontage of the scale the proposal affords is then implied to be appropriate in this location.

I note that while a entirely glazed waterfront façade may achieve a very positive *outlook* for boatshed occupants, it is the reciprocal visibility and visual effects of this design feature which are of concern.

Overall I disagree that the application as proposed would be successfully integrated within the setting's landscape character. The foremost concern is the extent of proposed glazing on the water facing façade (and the high contrast of the black aluminum joinery, amplifying the built form and scale).

This is not to say new boatshed development or renovation is not appropriate in this location. However, I do not consider the combination of the proposal's scale and its '*amount of glazing and obvious usage of the building for accommodation*' (p.12) demonstrates the very low level of effects arrived at by the application's landscape assessment. Consideration should therefore also be given to the precedent nature of the application.

I also note that the assessment does not cover all regional level landscape relevant planning matters (as identified by the processing planner). As the assessment lacks a full policy review, it therefore misses a complete analysis of the application against the identified landscape values of the planning framework.