

Appendix 31: Landscape Review of the Operative City Plan Living Taylors Mistake Bach Zone

TAYLORS MISTAKE BACHES – MEMORANDUM OF H LEWTHWAITE, CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

12-02-2015

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My full name is Hannah Lewthwaite and I am employed as Senior Landscape Planner in the Strategy and Planning Group of Christchurch City Council (the Council). My qualifications are Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (Hons), and I am a Registered Landscape Architect with the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects. I have over ten years experience as a Landscape Architect during which time I have been employed by the Council to provide a range of landscape planning and policy advice for Council strategies, area plans and various design guidelines. I have also regularly undertaken landscape and visual assessments and provided evidence as an expert witness for District and City Plan changes and resource consent applications for Council planning hearings and before the Environment Court.
- 1.2 The purpose of this memo is to provide comments regarding the potential to extend the Living Taylors Mistake Bach Zone under the Operative City Plan (refer to Appendix 2 for zoning map and development plan for Taylors Mistake). Any potential extension if assessed as being appropriate could provide for the relocation/rebuilding of additional scheduled baches that as a consequence of the recent earthquakes may have to be removed. The current Taylors Mistake Zone provides for up to 18 baches to be relocated/rebuilt. In particular I have been asked to comment what might constitute an appropriate extent or the capacity for new baches with regard to landscape character and visual amenity.
- 1.3 I have visited the site and surrounds on a number of occasions. I have also reviewed the Environment Court Decision No. C 50/2002 (including the accompanying landscape plan produced by Lucas Associates Landscape Architect), and the Environment Court Consent Order dated 20 October 2003.
- 1.4 I have also noted the findings of the Draft Christchurch Landscape Study 2014 which has been recently undertaken to assess the Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Coastal Natural areas for the purposes of the District Plan Review.
- 1.5 I have also reviewed the provisions of the Operative Christchurch City Plan in relation to the Taylors Mistake baches, and more specifically the Taylors Mistake Zone.
- 1.6 It is important to note that while I have read the Operative Christchurch City Plan and the Environment Court Decisions and Consent Order, I have not been influenced by these in coming to my conclusions in my assessment in terms of considering any potential batch zone extension and resulting effects on the landscape.
- 1.7 Appended to this memo are a number of graphic attachments comprising photographs which I have taken illustrating the site and surrounds including the wider landscape context and copies of relevant plans and aerial photographs (to be discussed).

2.0 SITE AND CONTEXT DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

2.1 Description of site and surrounds

Taylor's Mistake is situated where the peninsula known as Godley Head meets the mainland of the Christchurch coast and Port Hills. The bay has a north east facing aspect and includes a relatively wide open sandy beach of approximately 335m in length tapering to an enclosed valley bounded by steeply sloping hill sides which extend to approximately 255m in elevation.

2.2 Landcover varies from pasture grasses in the valley floor and most of the surrounding hillsides, to scrubby vegetation and grasses on the low dunes and foreshore, with shrubs and trees in the car park and recreation area (zoned Conservation 1) immediately inland. In terms of vegetation the wider valley has been considerably modified and denuded of pre-human vegetation however remnants of pre-European vegetation (Silver Tussock) are reported to exist within the upper gullies. In general the predominant vegetation within the wider valley consists of the introduced *Danthonia* Dry Grassland short grasses and exotic shrubs and herb species. An area of restoration planting of the native species *Spinifex* exists on the foreshore however which is notable for being the southernmost known location of this species.

2.3 In terms of landuse, residential properties are located on the northern side of the valley within a relatively narrow band which measures between 90 and 140m in width and 670m in length (measured from the peninsula known as the 'Giant's Nose'). Residential development/zoning occurs between elevations of approximately 10 and 40m amsl within the valley catchment.

2.4 Thirteen baches are located on the western side of the valley between elevations of 5 and 10m amsl (not including the 3 baches adjacent to the Taylor's Mistake Bay walkway). These are generally of small size with an average footprint of between 80 and 100m² and single storied (see photographs in Appendix One). The baches are currently (mostly) located within the Conservation 1 Zone and have a generally north facing aspect.

2.5 The Surf Lifesaving Club, various footpaths and sealed car park are located south of the foreshore and adjoined by a grassed 'spill over' car parking area and grassed paddocks to the south west. Publically accessible walkways circulate through the site.

2.6 A number of different zones exist on the valley floor and surrounding hillsides which are as follows:

1. Conservation 1A (Coastal margins on the foreshore above MHWS and in the recreation area to the south);
2. Living Hills (in the residential area to the north).
3. The wider Port Hills are zoned Rural Hills in this vicinity – except for Godley Head Peninsula which is zoned Conservation 1.

2.7 Maps showing the various City Plan zones are attached in Appendix Two.

2.8 Landscape Character Analysis

Landscape character is the distinctive combination of landscape attributes that give an area its identity.¹

The landscape character in the vicinity of the Taylor's Mistake Beach and wider valley varies considerably from the pastoral and relatively unmodified landforms of the southern extent of the valley to the built residential character on the north east hillside. One key observation is the contrast

¹ Landscape Character Definition, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, Best practice note landscape assessment and sustainable management 10.1

between the predominantly built and un-built parts of the valley with distinct differences in landscape character between these areas. The other is that the south side of the valley (north facing side) is considerably less modified (and therefore higher in natural character) than the north side (south facing side) of the valley.

- 2.9 In between these contrasts is the relatively small scale and less intensive existing bach development which is less visually dominant than the residential living hills zone on the opposite side of the valley due to its relatively low elevation and extent and small scale buildings. At present these baches are located at a low elevation and located such that they are generally aligned with the foreshore and recreation tracks immediately to the south. The existing baches, while a noticeable land use, do not visually dominate the valley and their presence has over time become associated with the quirky character and cultural heritage of the Taylors Mistake foreshore.
- 2.10 It is noted that this area has been considered in the Draft Christchurch Landscape Study 2014. The findings of this report are that at a district level the unbuilt portions of the valley and those not modified by the car parking area qualify as part of the wider Outstanding Natural Landscape of the Coastal Port Hills.
- 3.0 POTENTIAL BACH EXTENSION TO THE LIVING TAYLORS MISTAKE ZONE BOUNDARY AND LANDSCAPE EFFECTS
- 3.1 Consideration of potential landscape effects is the examination of the way in which landscapes are likely to respond to change. This can be measured by considering:
- Landscape resilience, and capacity
 - Landscape sensitivity and vulnerability
 - Opportunities, risks and threats

These are considered in turn below:

- 3.2 Landscape resilience and capacity
As previously discussed there is presently a distinct difference in landscape character between the various types of development within the valley. The residential Living Hills development, while highly visible from the foreshore and beach area, is on the whole a relatively minor landuse within the wider valley context.
- 3.3 The existing baches are at low elevations and are presently confined to the foreshore and the area immediately behind. While visible from the beach and surrounding area they do not dominate their setting at present given their existing location, low scale and the presence of surrounding vegetation. The buildings and hard surfacing associated with the car park and toilet block are also not a dominant visual component being of a small scale, at a low elevation, surrounded by vegetation and located adjacent to the Living Hills built up area to the north.
- 3.3 In terms of the capacity for an extension to the existing bach development it is my view that the area immediately to the south and south west of the existing baches could accommodate an extension of baches (assuming that any new baches were of the same size and scale as the existing baches). This area is demarcated in Appendix 3.
- 3.4 This area is considered to be suitable for the following reasons:
- its relatively low elevation (not above 20m amsl): meaning that a bach extension in this location will be less visible than at higher elevations;

- in terms of orientation this area it is still generally aligned with the north facing aspect of the baches on the immediate foreshore and immediately adjoins the existing baches: meaning that it would be perceived as an extension of the existing baches rather than an isolated new development;
- there is a natural low benched platform in this location which does not extend up the southern side of the valley and therefore does not intrude visually or physically further up the slope into the area of higher natural character on the hillside behind.

3.4 While this area is included within the Outstanding Natural landscape overlay at a district level, at a finer scale 'site by site' assessment the area immediately behind the existing baches is already reduced by the presence of the baches and the existing 4 wheel drive track (refer to photographs in Appendix One). It is noted that this area still has important values however as it is located at the foot of the undeveloped hillside and is on the boundary between the more modified valley floor and the relatively natural landform of the steeply sloping north facing hillside.

3.5 Landscape sensitivity and vulnerability, opportunities, risks and threats
In terms of capacity there are some important parameters or boundaries which define what I would consider an appropriate extent of new bach development. These are defined by the existing characteristics of the site including the elevation, orientation and topography (contours). These are important because they define boundaries beyond which I would consider that the potential adverse effects on the natural character and amenity of the wider valley would be significantly adversely affected. These boundaries are defined at a broad scale on the graphic attachment in Appendix Three.

3.6 The potential effects of bach extension much beyond these boundaries are:

- significantly reduced natural character of the wider valley; and
- reduction in the present contrast which exists between the 'built' and 'un built' parts of the valley leading to a perception of 'urban sprawl.'

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 In summary this memo has outlined the existing landscape character of the Taylors Mistake beach, foreshore and wider valley and identified that there is a distinct variation in natural character within this area. It has identified areas which are higher in natural character than others i.e. the less modified parts of the valley which I note are also identified by the draft Christchurch Landscape Study.

4.2 A relatively small area has been identified for potential bach expansion following a detailed analysis of the local site characteristics. Beyond this area I would not be comfortable supporting any further bach development given the sensitive nature of the landscape setting of the wider valley. I would also recommend that any further bach development include a planting plan with appropriate vegetation provided to visually soften and assist with integrating further baches into the landscape.

4.3 In relation to the existing Taylors Mistake Bach Zone I note that the zone boundaries are very similar to the area beyond which I am not comfortable supporting any further bach expansion from a landscape point of view. I have reached this conclusion independently by considering the typography and elevation of the area surrounding the bach zone, the alignment of contours, and the proximity to the existing baches.

4.4 As a result of this analysis I can conclude that the Operative City Plan Taylors Mistake Bach Zone is still the most appropriate in terms of managing landscape effects.

APPENDIX ONE



Existing baches and foreshore (1)



Existing baches and foreshore (2)

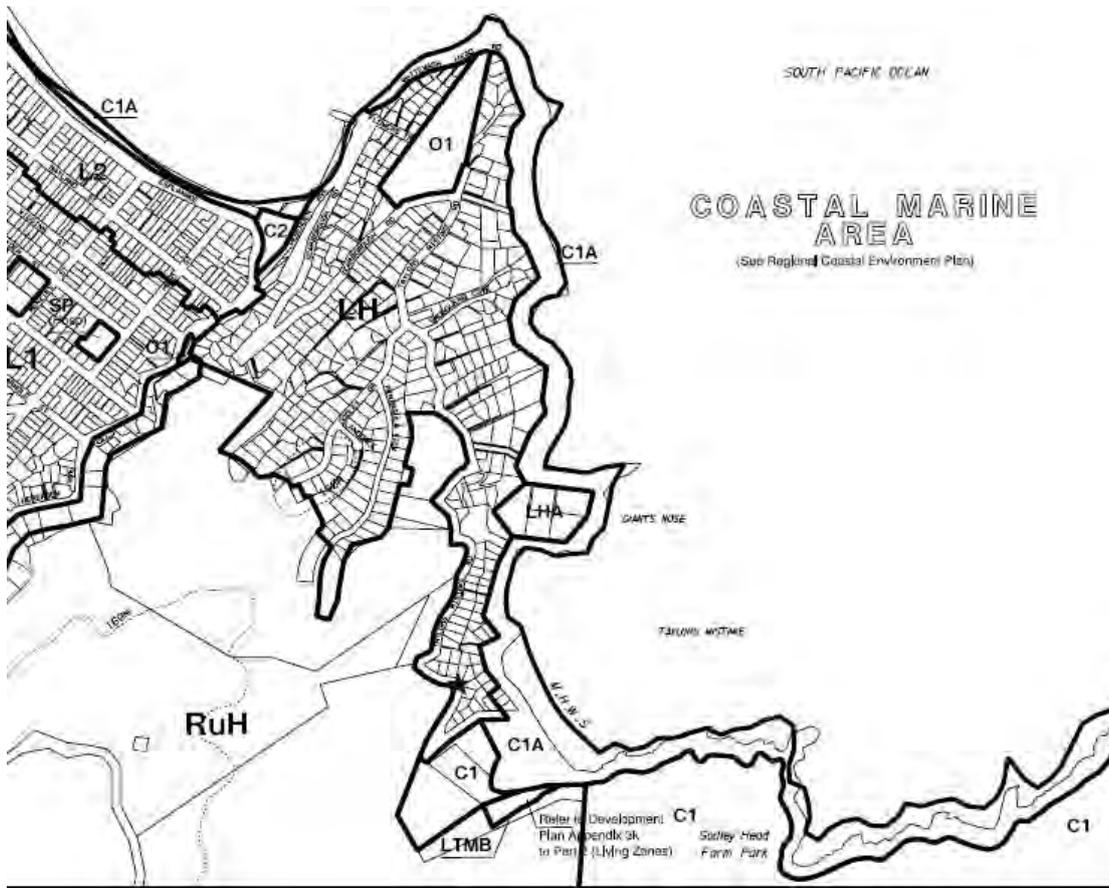


View of existing baches from the existing 4 wheel drive track to the south of the baches



View of the existing LH zone form the foreshore

APPENDIX TWO

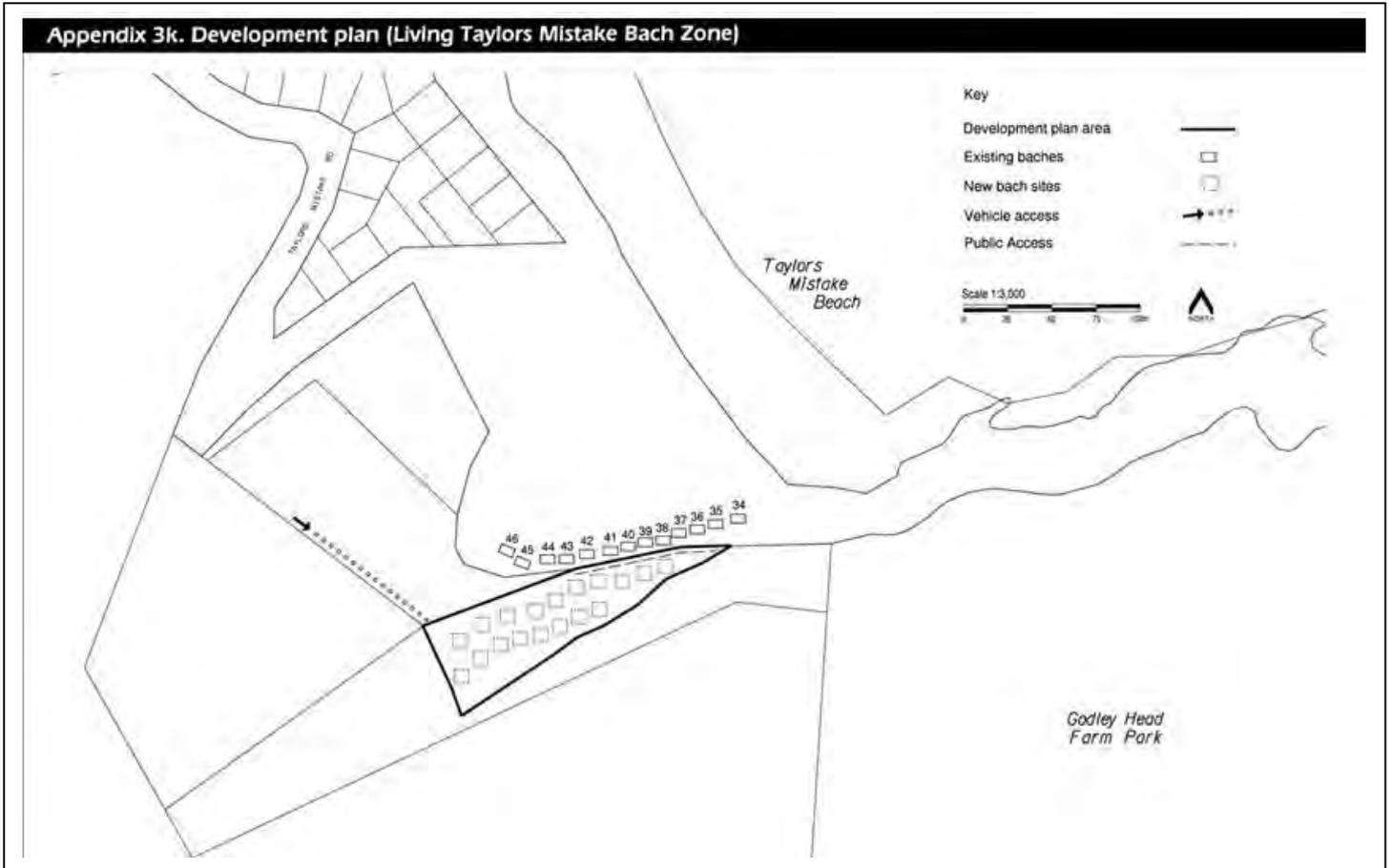


Christchurch City Plan Planning maps showing operative zones

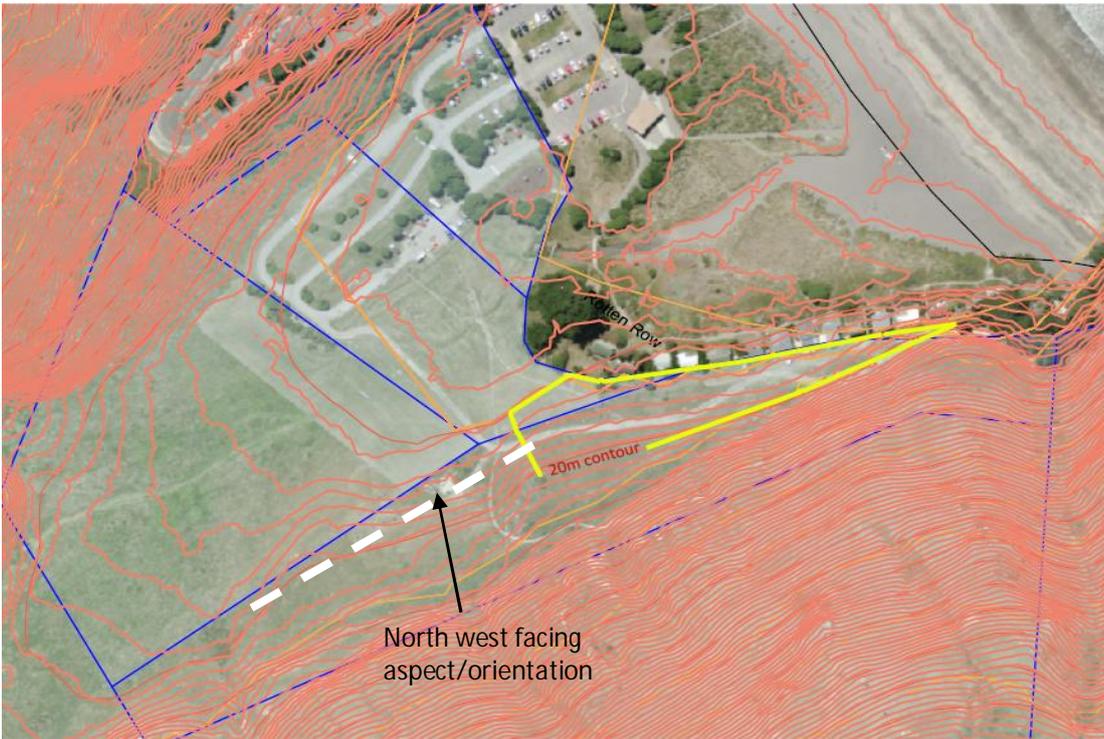


Snapshot from Google Earth showing the Outstanding Natural Landscape area from Draft Christchurch Landscape Study (in blue). Zone boundaries are shown in green.

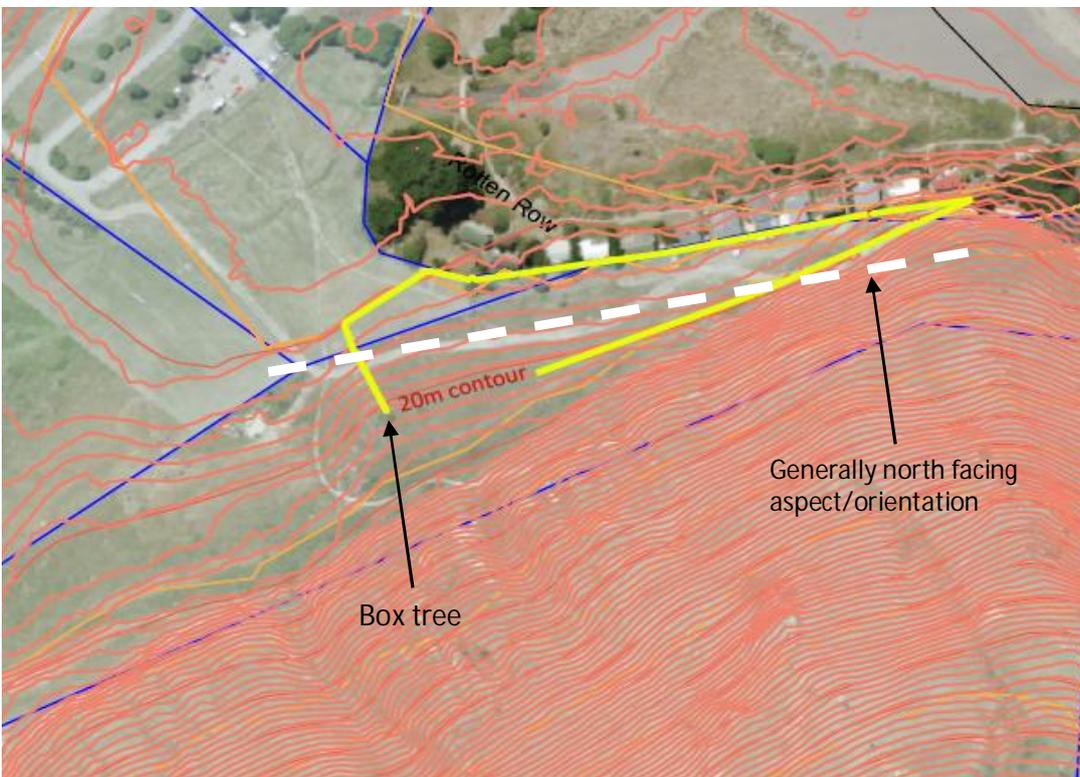
Appendix 3k. Development plan (Living Taylors Mistake Bach Zone)



APPENDIX THREE



Potential area for Bach expansion (in yellow).



Closer view of potential area for Bach expansion (in yellow).