

APPENDIX 4

Selwyn District Plan Objectives and Policies

PORT HILLS

Policy B1.4.5

Recognise the Port Hills as an Area of Outstanding Natural Landscape, and protect the following features:

- (a) The visibility of prominent landforms – ridges, spurs, rocky outcrops and volcanic dykes.
- (b) The summit and its outcrops such as Gibraltar Rock, and Cooper's Knob, which form part of the 'Ring of Seven Ladies.'

Policy B1.4.6

Avoid locating any dwelling, any other large structure or building, or any exotic plantation in the area from 30.46m vertically below the Summit Rd to the summit of the Port Hills unless it must be located in that area and cannot reasonably be located elsewhere.

Policy B1.4.7

Restrict subdivision and development of land for residential purposes within the Port Hills Area, recognising that such activities are more appropriate on the lower slopes (below 160m above sea level).

Policy B1.4.8

Keep residential density and site coverage with buildings at a low level which maintains the predominance of vegetation cover and the sense of low levels of human occupation and building development, which are characteristic of the Port Hills in Selwyn District.

Policy B1.4.9

Ensure any building or structure erected on the Port Hills and any associated access, utilities or other infrastructure, is designed, sited, landscaped and finished in exterior materials which:

- Blend in with the surrounding landscape; and
- Maintain the visibility of prominent landforms listed in Policy B1.4.5, as viewed from any public road.

Policy B1.4.10

Recognise exotic plantations as part of the land uses on the Port Hills and, wherever practical, encourage these plantations to be:

- (a) Planted in patterns which reflect the contours of the landscape;
- (b) Planted in places which do not screen the visibility of the landforms listed in Policy B1.4.5, as viewed from any public road; and
- (c) Interspersed with other land uses and vegetation cover.

Policy B1.4.11

Avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse visual effects associated with earthworks in the Port Hills Area by ensuring that:

- (a) Earthworks are limited in volume; and
- (b) The site is, to the greatest extent practicable, recontoured and replanted to the same state as surrounding land either when earthworks cease or at the end of appropriate stages (in the case of a large-scale operation).

Explanation and Reasons

The Port Hills area within Selwyn District has been identified as an Area of Outstanding Landscape. This classification reflects a combination of the geomorphology of the Port Hills (its volcanic origins), its prominent position as a backdrop to the Plains and to Christchurch City, and the predominantly rural land uses on the Port Hills within Selwyn District. The rural land uses help maintain the visibility of geomorphic features such as ridges, spurs, dykes and outcrops, and help make the area popular for outdoor recreation. The Port Hills also has significant landscape values for tāngata whenua, particularly the summit and rocky outcrops, ridges and spurs. Gibraltar Rock and Cooper's Knob form part of a ring of rocky outcrops known by local rūnanga as The Ring of Seven Ladies.

Policy B1.4.5 identifies the Port Hills as an Area of Outstanding Landscape and lists those features of the Port Hills which contribute most to these values. Policies B1.4.6 to B1.4.11 describe the activities and effects which are appropriate and inappropriate to maintain the landscape values of the Port Hills.

The Port Hills is not a pristine natural landscape. Māori and Europeans have occupied the area and vegetation cover has been modified for cultivation and pastoral farming. More recently, land uses have diversified to include residential developments with a rural lifestyle, outdoor recreation and exotic plantations. Policies B1.4.6 to B1.4.11 recognise that all these activities may be appropriate or inappropriate on the Port Hills, depending on the number, scale and nature of these activities. The policies address effects of erecting houses (dwellings), other large structures or buildings, earthworks and tree planting.

Policy B1.4.6 recognises and protects the special landscape values of the summit of the Port Hills. The area between the Summit Road and the summit is the most visible part of the Port Hills landscape from the Plains and Christchurch. It is an area which is much used for recreation. The summit and ridgelines are important landforms for tāngata whenua. Mountains and hills are part of their ancestry or whakapapa, and erecting structures on the summit of a hill or mountain is inappropriate. Policy B1.4.6 does not allow for large structures, buildings or exotic plantations in that area from 30.46 metres vertically below the Summit Road to the summit. This policy reflects the tenor of the Summit Road (Canterbury) Protection Act 2001, but acknowledges, as does that Act, that there may be circumstances in which exceptions are appropriate.

Policies B1.4.7, B1.4.8 and B1.4.9 deal with effects of buildings and structures on the Port Hills, generally. Policies B1.4.7 and B1.4.8 acknowledge that there will be a demand for subdivision and erecting houses (dwellings) within the Port Hills in the future. Policy B1.4.7 recognises that this activity may more appropriately occur in that area shown on the planning maps as the Lower Slopes (the area below the 160m contour). The Lower Slopes is an area slightly less prized for its recreational and landscape values than the Upper Slopes (the area above the 160m contour).

Residential subdivision and development on the Port Hills within the Christchurch City has occurred largely below that contour. The policy does recognise that there may be some sites in the Upper Slopes where the visual effects of erecting a dwelling may be minor. The rules are tougher in this area, and allow for public notification of any resource consent application.

While there is some scope for further subdivision for residential purposes on the Port Hills, Policy B1.4.8 seeks to keep residential density and building site coverage generally, at a low level. The current low level of building development on the Port Hills in Selwyn District is a major contributor to its landscape and recreational values. Policy B1.4.8 should be read in conjunction with Policy B4.1.1, which sets a residential density standard for the Port Hills.

Policy B1.4.9 is to manage the design and siting of all large buildings and structures on the Port Hills to try and mitigate adverse visual effects. Policy B1.4.9 is not intended to prevent houses and other buildings from being erected on the Port Hills, provided they are designed and sited in sympathy with the surrounding landscape. The policy relates to both buildings and any associated access, utilities and infrastructure. Often roads or vehicular accessways, power pylons and similar features can have a greater visual effect on the landscape than the building they serve. The policy is implemented by a rule which manages the reflectance value of the exterior finish of buildings. The reflectivity of a surface can determine how prominent a structure or building looks, more so than hue or colour. In some cases, a finish with a high reflectance value may be appropriate, for example, where the building is screened or the material is a natural stone which is appropriate for the area.

Policy B1.4.10 applies to planting of exotic plantations on the Port Hills. As with Policy B1.4.9, Policy B1.4.10 is not intended to prevent exotic plantations on the Port Hills. Rather the policy is to manage the location and pattern of planting to reduce the visual effects of the plantation on landscape values. In particular, the policy encourages plantations to be planted in patterns that follow landforms, rather than rectangular shapes which cut across or dominate landforms, and in patterns which do not screen prominent features listed in Policy B1.4.5. Policy B1.4.10 does recognise that these patterns of planting may not always be practical to achieve, eg where there are sites which are unsuitable for planting for other reasons, where there is difficulty with access to sites or property boundaries which cut across landforms.

Policy B1.4.11 manages the effects of earthworks in the Port Hills Area. Earthworks have the potential adversely to affect the outstanding natural landscape values of the Port Hills as well as having impacts upon land stability, sedimentation, soil productivity and habitats. District Plan provisions will ensure that effects on landscape values are avoided, remedied or mitigated by limiting the volume of earthworks and requiring site rehabilitation where appropriate. The 'Land and Vegetation Management Plan – Part II: Earthworks and Vegetation Clearance on the Port Hills', administered by the Canterbury Regional Council, contains specific provisions to manage those effects of earthworks that have to do with soil conservation and the use or diversion of water – in particular those pertaining to slope stability, soil erosion, sedimentation, water quality and alterations to watercourses. Additional consents may be required from that Council.