

Why Are We Here?

- Selwyn District Council is undertaking a project to review landscape protection for the lowest portion of the Port Hills, below the 60m contour to the point where they meet the plains – what could be called the “toe” of the hill.
- This review has come about through the submissions and decisions made as part of the District Plan process.
- Before Council makes a decision on whether to change the current provisions in the District Plan, we would like to know what the community thinks about the issue.

What are the Port Hills?

- The remnant of an ancient volcano, a distinct landform which clearly shows its geological origins.
- A landscape that reflects a long history of human activity, but is still a largely natural (as opposed to “man-made”) environment.
- An area with particular meaning for Ngai Tahu, and specific sites with high cultural values.
- A valuable resource for landowners to provide for their economic and social needs - places to live, and productive land uses like farming, forestry, and vineyards.
- An area with increasing biodiversity values, particularly through regeneration of native vegetation.
- An important recreation resource for greater Christchurch – mountain biking, walking, running.
- An “outstanding natural landscape”, in whole or in part.

“Outstanding Natural Landscape”

How is this defined?

- Section 6(b) of the Resource Management Act 1991 makes protection of “outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development” a matter of national importance.
- Landscape architects can provide an “expert” view, on what constitutes an outstanding natural landscape. But communities and landowners also need to be involved in defining which landscapes are valued enough to require extra protection.
- Identifying an area as outstanding natural landscape doesn’t mean there can be no further development. But development that does occur has to be more carefully managed through rules in the District Plan, to avoid losing the landscape’s natural values.
- There has already been a lot of expert landscape analysis of the Port Hills in Christchurch City, Banks Peninsula and Selwyn District. There have also been a number of Environment Court cases looking at the issue. However each situation is different and needs to be considered on its merits.

The Port Hills in Selwyn District

Previous plans provided for the landscape values of the Port Hills with a range of rules including a 40 ha minimum subdivision standard. The boundary of the Port Hills zone generally followed along the base of the hills or a nearby feature such as a road.

Council began a consultation process with landowners on the Port Hills in 1998 and commissioned expert landscape advice.

As a result of this process, the Proposed Plan was notified in 2001, with the 60m contour marking the bottom most extent of the outstanding natural landscape of the Port Hills. However the contour was not labeled in the District Plan, and there were no policies referring to the use of the 60m contour as the bottom of the Port Hills outstanding natural landscape zone.

This meant that landscape protection was removed from the “toe of the Port Hills” below the 60m contour, which became part of the Inner Plains zone, with a 4 ha minimum lot size.

Submissions were made on the District Plan, and heard by a Panel of two Councillors and an independent commissioner. The Council decision largely confirmed the Plan provisions for the Port Hills.

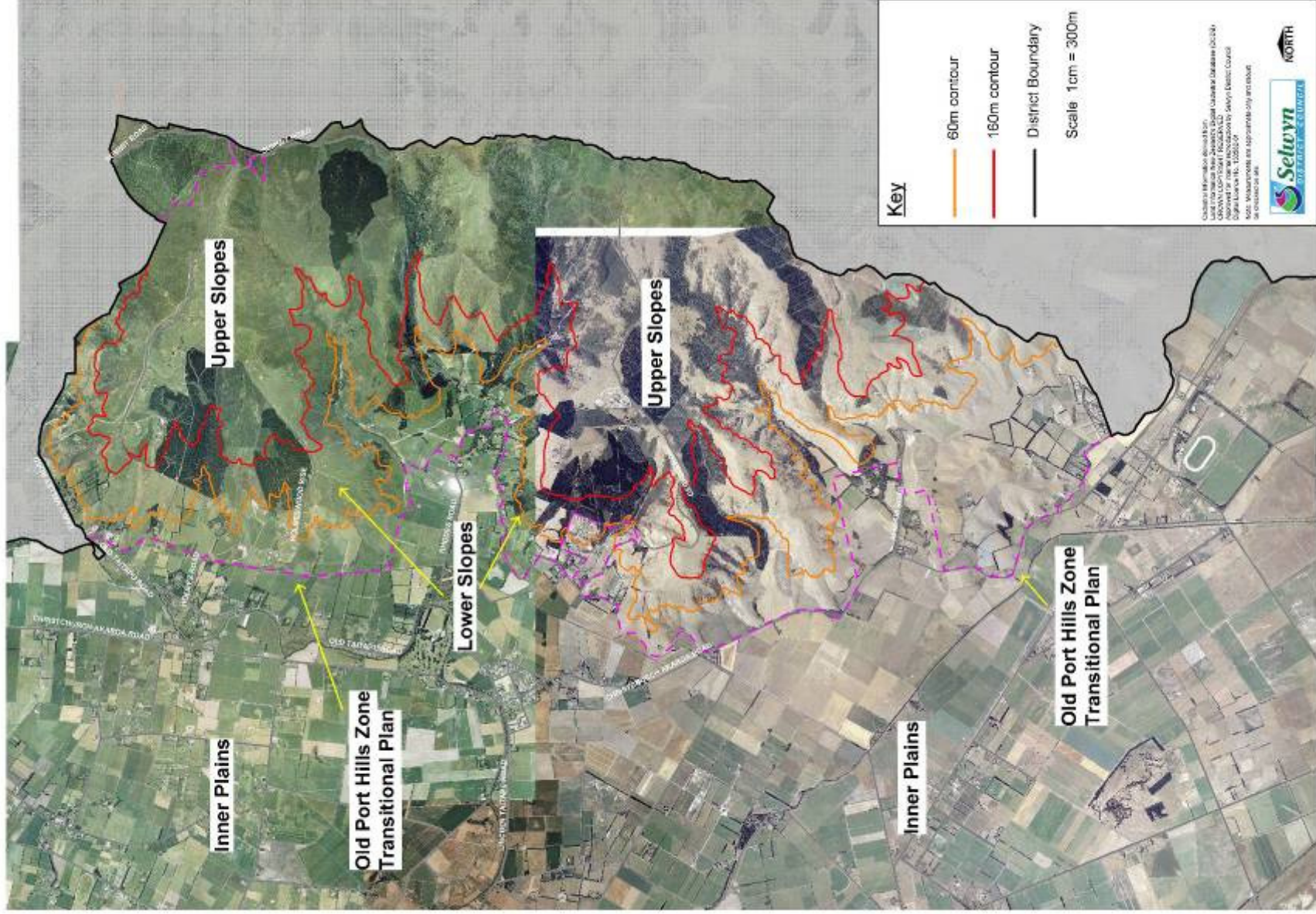
However the Hearings Panel pointed out that it was unclear how the lower 60m contour boundary of the Port Hills had been determined, and recommended that Council readdress this boundary by way of a Variation to the District Plan.

The decision also noted that there are differences in the landscape character within the toe of the Port Hills below the 60m contour.

- The area between Early Valley Road and Tai Tapu is more developed, and has more planting.
- The area from Tai Tapu to Motukarara is less developed and planted, and is generally more visible.

What Rules Apply to the Port Hills? (See also map next page)

	Toe of the Hill (below the orange line)	60 m – 160 m contour (between the orange and red lines)	Above 160 m Contour (above the red line)	CCC Rules for Adjacent Port Hills
Rural Zone	Inner Plains	Lower Slopes	Upper Slopes	Rural H Zone
Minimum Subdivision / Dwelling Density	1 household / 4 ha	1 household / 40 ha	1 household / 100 ha	1 household / 100 ha
Status of building a dwelling on a lot which meets the minimum size	Permitted – no resource consent needed.	Restricted discretionary resource consent. Application tested against landscape criteria	Non-complying resource consent.	Discretionary resource consent below 160 m contour. Non- complying resource consent above 160 m contour.
Other buildings – eg farm buildings	Permitted – no resource consent needed	Permitted if building is $\leq 40 \text{ m}^2$; $\leq 4 \text{ m}$ in height; and $\leq 37\%$ reflectivity. Otherwise restricted discretionary resource consent.		Permitted if $\leq 40 \text{ m}^2$ and below 160 m contour. Non- complying above 160m contour.
Earthworks	Permitted up to 5,000 m^3	Permitted up to 20m^3 , with exemptions for some earthworks related to farming activities. Otherwise discretionary resource consent.		Permitted up to 25m^3 (with other criteria).
Forestry	Permitted	Restricted discretionary resource consent. Application tested against landscape criteria.		Discretionary resource consent



Current Port Hills Review Project

- Since the District Plan changed the lower boundary of the Port Hills, there has been increasing interest in 4 ha subdivision and new dwellings on the toe of the hill.
- As recommended by the Panel that heard submissions on the District Plan, Council is reviewing the use of the 60m contour as the bottom of the Rural Port Hills outstanding natural landscape zone. There are also some mistakes that need to be fixed, for example the omission of a zone for the area alongside Early Valley Road.
- As a first step, Council commissioned landscape architect Andrew Craig to provide advice on the appropriate landscape protection for the toe of the hill.
- Council now has three landscape opinions indicating that some landscape protection is appropriate for the toe of the Port Hills, below the 60m contour.
- Before deciding whether to change the District Plan and if so, what changes to make, Council is seeking the input of both the landowners potentially affected by any change, and others in the community interested in the Port Hills landscape.
- Council is also seeking the input of interested organisations, for example Christchurch City Council, Forest and Bird, The Summit Road Society, Environment Canterbury, Federated Farmers, Department of Conservation and Horticulture New Zealand.

Recommendations from the Craig Report

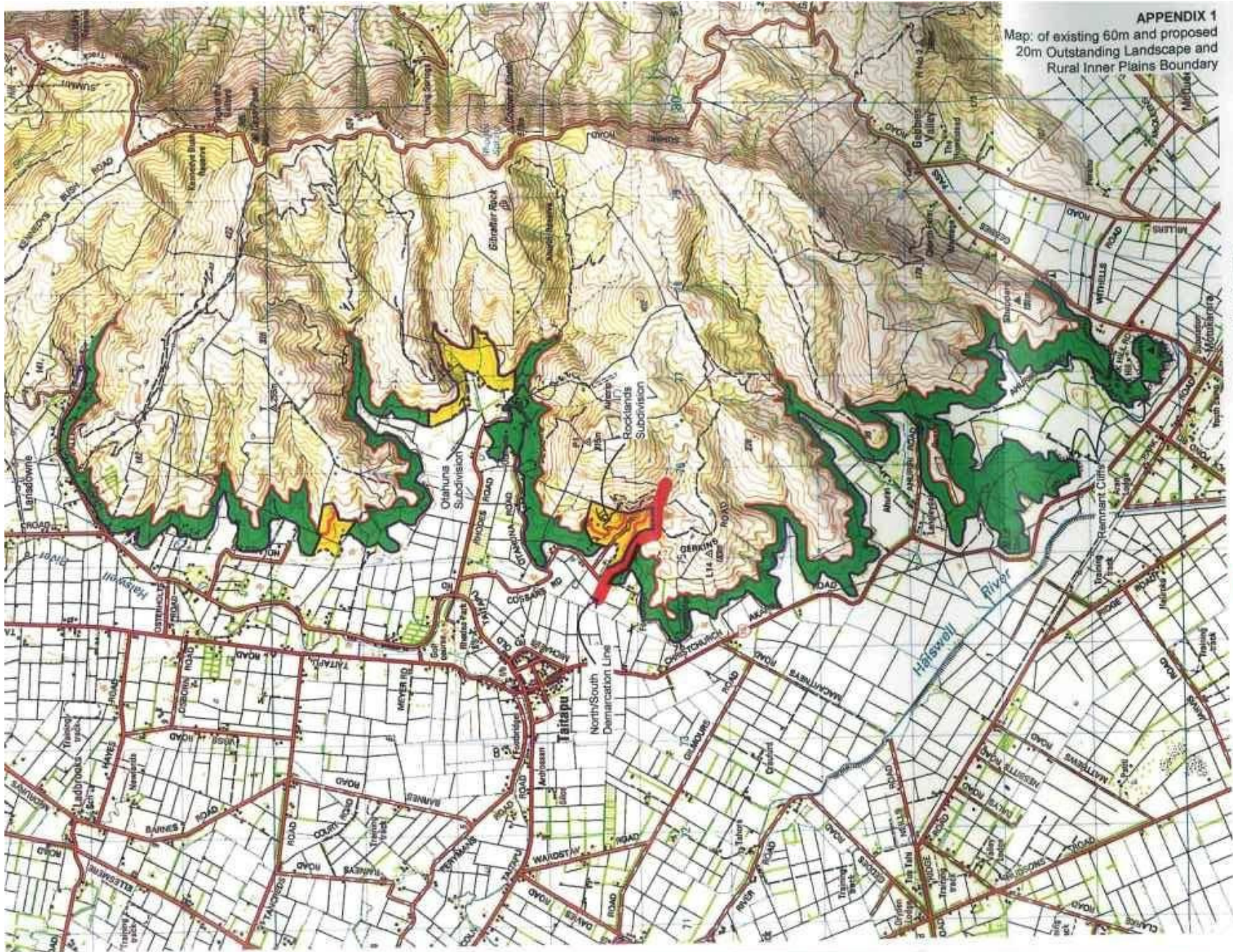
*Landscape Assessment of the Lower Port Hills in Selwyn District
Andrew Craig, Peter Rough Landscape Architects Ltd.
May 2006*

What is an appropriate lower boundary?

- The boundary line between the Port Hills and the plains should follow the topographic boundary at the point where the two features meet. For ease of plan administration the line should be drawn at the 20m contour.
- The meeting point of the two topographic features of the plains and hills defines the landscape quality of each.
- Three clusters of housing at Otahuna, Rocklands and Homleswood Rise can be excluded from the 20m contour boundary.

What degree of landscape management is appropriate?

- Apply the same rules as currently apply between the 60m and 160m contours – 40 ha minimum, with dwellings a restricted-discretionary activity.
- Add further landscape matters to assist in assessing applications for dwellings and subdivisions.



APPENDIX 1
Map of existing 60m and proposed
20m Outstanding Landscapes and
Rural Inner Plains Boundary

Orange = 60m contour
Blue = 20m contour
North/South Demarcation Line

Existing Outstanding Landscapes/ Rural Inner Plains Boundary
Proposed Outstanding Landscapes/ Rural Inner Plains Boundary
Indicates less modified landscapes to the south

POSSIBLE PORT HILLS VARIATION SOME OPTIONS FOR THE TOE OF THE HILL

Options	Comments
1. Status quo - leave plan provisions as they are.	Will allow continued development, with no specific controls to protect the landscape.
2. Introduce landscape controls on buildings on the toe of the hill, while maintaining 4 ha lot size.	Will control to some extent the landscape effects of new buildings. BUT Will allow continued development, with only limited controls.
3. Introduce a 20 ha minimum lot size on the toe of the hill from Tai Tapu to Motukarara.	Some landscape protection for least developed section of the toe of the hill. BUT Does not address impact of buildings or plantations. Does not provide any landscape protection in the area from Tai Tapu to Early Valley.
4. Introduce a 20 ha minimum lot size on the toe of the hill from Tai Tapu to Motukarara, plus landscape controls on buildings, forestry etc.	Provides landscape protection for least developed section of the toe of the hill. BUT Does not provide any landscape protection in the area from Tai Tapu to Early Valley.
5. Introduce a 20 ha minimum lot size for all of the toe of the hill (excluding already developed areas).	Some landscape protection for all of the toe of the hill. BUT Does not address impact of buildings, plantations etc.
6. Introduce a 20 ha lot size, for all of the toe of the hill (excluding already developed areas). Include landscape controls on buildings, plantations etc.	Addresses main sources of landscape change for all of Port Hills geographic feature. BUT 20 ha may be insufficient in some prominent areas.
7A. Bring the Lower Slopes Zone (40 ha) down to the toe of the hill for the prominent ridges and other sensitive areas. Retain the Inner Plains Zone (4 ha) up to around the 60 m contour in less prominent areas eg valleys, already developed areas.	Supported by landscape expert (G Densem). Protects most prominent areas of lowest slopes, allowing 4 ha development in less prominent areas.
7B. Introduce a 20 ha minimum lot size (excluding already developed areas) for the area between Early Valley Road and Tai Tapu. Include landscape controls on buildings, forestry etc. Make the remainder of the toe of the hill from Tai Tapu to Motukarara part of the Port Hills Lower Slopes Zone (40 ha)	Supported by landscape expert (A Craig). Recognises the two different character areas of the lowest slopes. Gives the most robust protection to the more sensitive landscape between Tai Tapu and Motukarara.
8. Add toe of the hill (excluding already developed areas) to the Port Hills Lower Slopes Zone (40 ha)	Robust support from landscape experts (A Craig, D Lucas, G Densem) – captures all of Port Hills geographic feature, within two clear management zones.

How can you be involved?

- Take some information away to read and think about.
- Fill in the feedback form and ***return to the Council by 21 September.***
- Add your name to the contact list to receive further information.
- Check the Council's website for developments.

What will happen next?

- All responses will be recorded and analysed.
- A report on the responses will be produced and sent to every one who has expressed an interest in the process (December 2007).
- A report to Council with a staff recommendation on the preferred options will be prepared, based on both the expert landscape advice and the responses from the open days and consultation with other organisations (Early 2008).
- Council will decide whether to undertake a change to the Plan, and if so, what changes to make (Mid 2008).
- If a change to the plan is undertaken, formal public consultation under the Resource Management Act will occur through the submissions and hearings process.