

# Tākaka Hill

Guidelines for subdivisions, buildings & plantings

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# 1. Introduction

Takaka Hill is renowned for its outstanding landscape quality and views. This karst landscape lies between the Pikikiruna Range to the north and the Arthur Range to the south, separating Tasman Bay and Golden Bay.

The topography, climate, vegetation patterns and panoramic views as well as the strategic location between two national parks contribute to the unique character of the Takaka Hill. These unique qualities have resulted in the Takaka Hill being identified in the Tasman Resource Management Plan (TRMP) as a “Landscape Priority Area”.

To protect these characteristics, new buildings or major extensions to existing buildings within the “Landscape Priority Area” require resource consent, as will new forestry proposals. (See Chapter 18.2 of the TRMP)

In a resource consent application for a building, the Council will consider matters including:

- The effects of the location, design and appearance of the building, including scale, materials, colour and landscaping.
- The effects on natural features and the indigenous vegetation.

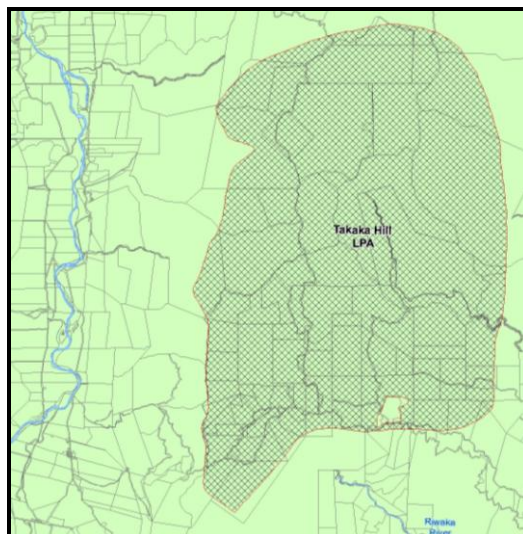
In a resource consent application for a plantation forest, the Council will consider matters including:

- The scale and shape of the forest, planting pattern and compatibility with the topography of the site.
- The effect on the view from public roads and open spaces.
- Planting and retention of indigenous vegetation to ameliorate future harvesting effects and maintain the integrity of the waterways.

# 2. Aim

The aim of this booklet is to provide guidelines and advice to ensure any new developments in the Takaka Hill area (buildings, roads, plantations) are designed to maintain and protect the unique natural qualities and landscape values of the area.

# 3. Takaka Hill Landscape Priority Area



## 4. Visual Character of the Takaka Hill

The landscape character of an area is the visual expression of the main elements that make up the picture – the line, form, colour, texture, and pattern. It is determined by those elements that, through repetition, combine to give a place its distinctive identity. For the Takaka Hill this includes:

**The landforms** of the Takaka Hill are a range of highly visible and distinctive features, including bluffs, rock outcrops, sinkholes, ridgelines and skylines. The surface karst features predominate throughout the native scrub and pastoral areas of the Hill. They are obscured from view where native bush remnants remain or where forestry activities predominate. There are panoramic views to be had over much of the southern section and beyond to Tasman and Golden Bays.

**The vegetation** in the area contributes to an evergreen landscape. Pastoral farming patterns are mixed with areas of remnant forests, scrub and plantation forestry. The proximity of the area to Abel Tasman and Kahurangi national parks makes the retention and protection of existing and regenerating indigenous forests important to provide habitat and ecological corridors.

**Buildings** are made visible by their form, location and colour in the landscape. There is a low density of building development on the Takaka Hill. The majority of the houses are sited discreetly and are not noticeable from the road. Buildings located close to the road in highly visible locations cause the greatest impact on the landscape.

**The roads**, State Highway 60 and Canaan Road, are the means of transport and access to the area's unique features and provide the main viewing platform for the area. While there are two viewing lay-bys on SH60, at Ngarua Caves and Bobs Lookout, expansive views are enjoyed from all along these roads. Walkways have been developed, such as the Takaka Hill and the Hawkes Lookout tracks, which encourage greater exploration of the area.

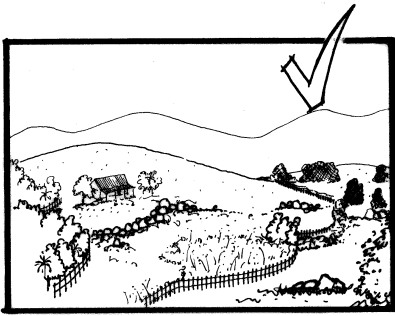
**The visual sensitivity** of the karst landscape and visual prominence of much of the area result in a landscape that has a low capacity to absorb change and a character which is particularly sensitive to alteration to land use, land cover and land form.

## 5. Guidelines

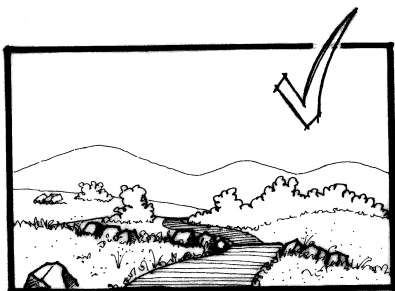
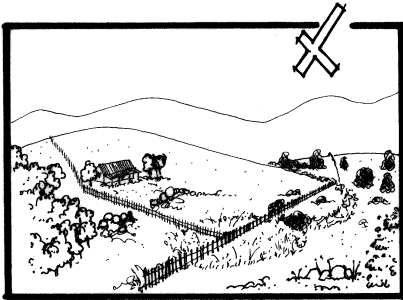
### 5.1 Subdivisions

For subdivisions on Takaka Hill, consideration needs to be given to the pattern and scale of subdivision, the plantings, the road layout, and the nature and extent of earthworks. To ensure they are consistent with the character of the landscape:

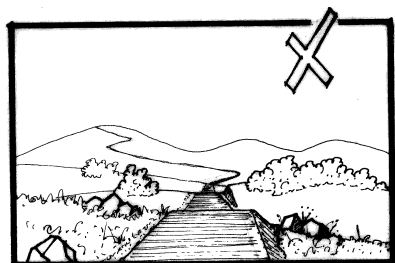
- Property boundaries should be located in response to existing natural features of the landscape such as vegetation patterns, valleys, contours and streams, rather than form an arbitrary grid.
- Allotment size. The existing minimum section size of 50 hectares generally maintains the low density of houses when seen from any particular viewing location. The topography and vegetation patterns dictate the absorption capacity of an area with the exposed karst topography being particularly sensitive to change.
- Landscape features such as wetlands, prominent trees, or rock outcrops should be recognised, protected, and integrated into the subdivision layout.
- Indigenous vegetation cover, both established and regenerating forest, should be retained and protected. Where areas are grazed by stock, bush remnants need to be fenced to avoid browsing of the understorey.
- Consider opportunities to extend existing walkways and incorporate natural features into the subdivision design as reserves or covenants.



*Subdivision boundaries to follow natural patterns and respect natural features*



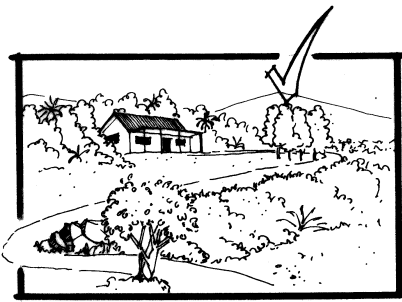
*Use roading that follows the contours and preserves natural features*



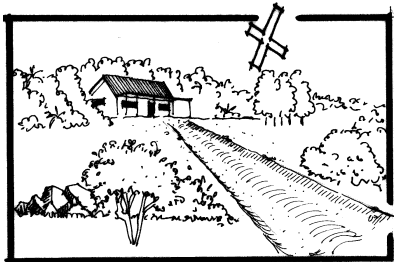
*Avoid zigzags across exposed faces*

### 5.2 Roads, Accessways and Driveways

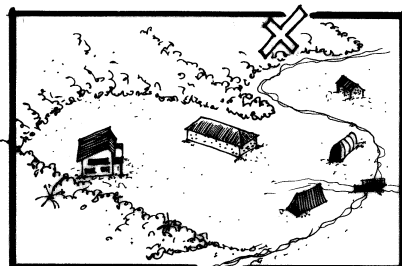
- Roads, accessways and driveways should recognise and acknowledge natural features and reflect the dominant lines in the landscape context. Locate where possible on the edges of landform and vegetation patterns.
- To reduce visual exposure and the potential to cause erosion, roads and accessways should follow the existing contours and avoid steep zigzags across exposed faces.
- Avoid excessive excavation for roading. Special care needs to be taken to avoid damage to the existing rock formations.



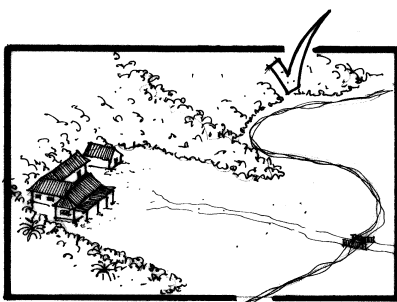
*Buildings should be sited to allow appropriate access to be achieved*



*Straight driveways are visually prominent and susceptible to increased erosion*



*Cluster buildings together and provide unity in form to reduce visual impact*



### 5.3 Siting of Buildings

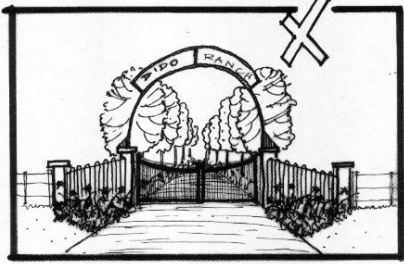
The location and siting of buildings can have a major visual impact.

- New buildings should be sited so that they are not highly visible from public roads.
- Ensure that building sites are located so that road access can be provided to them in an alignment and grade that is appropriate.
- Buildings should be nestled on the edges of landforms and vegetation patterns to take advantage of shelter and help them to blend into the landscape.
- Earthworks for building sites and accessways should be finished to a natural contour, blended to adjacent slopes and revegetated with woody or herbaceous plants as appropriate for the context.
- To protect neighbour's privacy and views avoid siting new buildings within close proximity to or in view of neighbours.

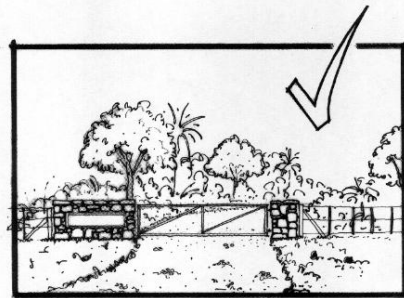
### 5.4 Building Form and Colour

The intention of the guidelines is not to limit the designer's creativity but to encourage sympathetic design in response to this landscape.

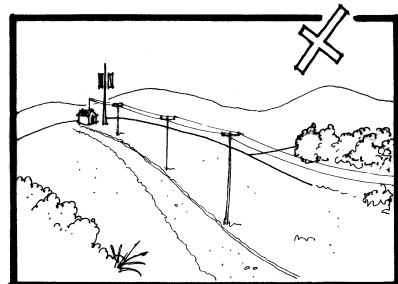
- Cluster buildings together on a site and provide a unity in colour and design to reduce the impact of new development.
- The shape of structures should generally reflect background landforms. Avoid large unrelieved expanses of roofs and walls.
- Materials for buildings should respond to and link with the surrounding landscape.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that rooflines do not project above the crest of the ridge or backdrop vegetation.
- In general, roofs should be darker than walls. Colours should be based on background colours and be low in reflectivity (less than 30%). Small areas of brighter accent colours can be used to contrast positively with the dominant background colour.



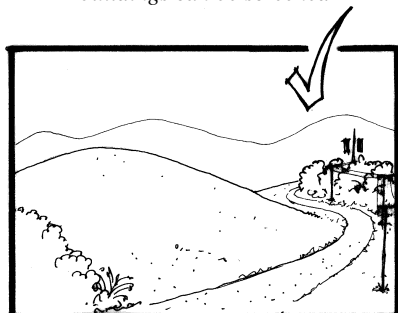
*Gates and signage should be low key using local materials to preserve rural character*



*Gates, if required, should be rural in character*



*Avoid exposed ridges and locate where buildings can be screened*



*Locate utilities in discrete positions*

## 5.5 Other Structures, Fences, Gates and Signage

- Structures such as yards, retaining walls and bridges should be of natural materials.
- Avoid high profile gates. Gates, if required, should be rural in character, using local material.
- Outdoor lighting should be low-level and focused downwards to minimise light spill that affects the night sky.
- Generally, signage should be unlit and low-level using natural materials. Colours used should be based on background colours and be low in reflectivity (less than 30%). Small areas of brighter accent colours can be used to contrast positively with the dominant background colour.

## 5.6 Utility Services

Utility services such as overhead wires and transmitter towers can have a major impact on the area.

- Locate utilities in discreet positions and avoid exposed ridgelines and view corridors. Where possible, locate towers where ancillary buildings can be effectively screened.
- Excavation should be minimised. Special care needs to be taken to avoid damage to the existing rock formations.
- Landscape features such as wetlands, watercourses, ridgelines or prominent rock outcrops should be avoided.

## 5.7 Wildlife Corridors

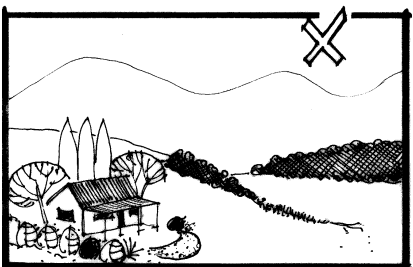
The proximity of the area to two national parks makes the accommodation of wildlife in the area critical.

- Where possible, protect all areas of existing and regenerating native forest by fencing out grazing animals.
- Consider species that will attract local indigenous wildlife. Link isolated indigenous forest islands with each other as well as with the larger indigenous forests.



## 5.8 Amenity Planting

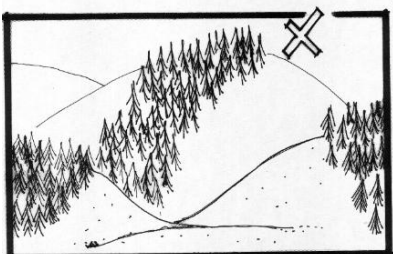
- The planting around buildings requires a simple ‘broadbrush’ approach suitable to a rural location rather than the more ornamental styles found in urban settings.
- Large groups of one or two species should be used. Choose species that reflect the surrounding countryside.
- Avoid coloured cultivars such as golden totara, yellow cypress and deciduous species with bright autumn colour, as these types will stand out in the predominantly green/brown landscape of the Takaka Hill.



Avoid an urban planting scheme.  
Use species that reflect the surrounding countryside

## 5.9 Weed Control

- As weed control is expensive and labour intensive, effective management of weeds in an area should focus on the prevention of weeds becoming established. The co-operation of all residents is needed to remove all known and potential weeds wherever they are found, and to make sure that none are deliberately introduced.
- Tasman District Council's *Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007*, identifies plants and pests problematical to this area. This booklet and further information is available from the Council. Species identified as being problematical include Pampas Grass, Buddleia, Old Man's Beard, Passion Vine, Madeira Vine, Cotoneaster and Wild Ginger.

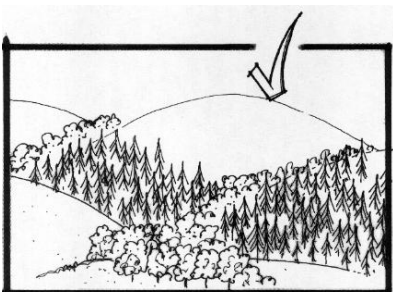


Avoid plantings that create silhouettes

## 5.10 Plantations

The Takaka Hill landscape is vulnerable to change. Plantation forestry can have a dramatic impact on a landscape. Some general guidelines to follow are:

- **Selection of Species**  
Species grown in prominent locations should be evergreen conifer species. Trees with prominent spring or autumn colour should be avoided.  
*Note: Douglas Fir should be discouraged from being grown adjacent to national parks due to its ability to invade the indigenous forests.*
- **Shaping**  
The shape of woodlots should reflect existing landforms and avoid the imposition of arbitrary geometric shapes onto slopes.
- Avoid planting that silhouettes single specimens or edges of plantations against the skyline.
- Plant trees along the contour line rather than in straight lines running vertically up and down the slopes.
- Where possible locate new plantations adjacent to existing ones to avoid a fragmented pattern developing in the landscape.



Shape of woodlots to reflect existing contours

## Reference Books

- *Tasman Nelson Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007*, available from TDC offices.
- Cartman J (1985) *Growing New Zealand alpine plants*, Reed Methuen Publishers Ltd, Auckland.
- Mark A F & Adams N M (1986) *New Zealand alpine plants*, Reed Methuen Publishers Ltd, Auckland.
- Porteous T. (1993) *Native forest restoration: A practical guide for landowners*, Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust.

## Further Assistance

- Specific advice for your site can be obtained by contacting architects or landscape architects, listed in the Yellow Pages.
- Information regarding the Resource Management Plan can be obtained from the Tasman District Council.

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