

SUBMISSION ON:
PC85A – RURAL PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT
PC85D – RURAL LIVING ENVIRONMENT

EVIDENCE 53
TOPIC 85A-D, 86A-B, 87, 102, 114
SUB# Rural Plan Changes
DATE 24/07/2017

HEARING STATEMENT FOR SUBMISSION 196 – MARK SEAKINS

Commissioners, Council staff and members of the public.

PART A – Original Submission

My name is Mark Seakins and I own a property at 44 Crawford Road, Maungakaramea. I have owned this property for 11 years of which I have lived there with my wife and three children for 6 of those years.

My property is 5.1 ha in size and is currently zoned Countryside Environment. The property is mostly in pasture with 0.6ha of native bush and 0.8ha planted in persimmons. It has one house located on the property. We did plant the property in avocados, but a clay layer 1m under the soil meant that the avocados trees got wet feet and didn't survive.

Under the current rules for the Countryside Environment, I can as-of-right build one Minor Residential Unit on this property. In addition, I could as a Restricted Discretionary consent, covenant the native bush and subdivide one block off under the Environmental Benefit provisions of the District Plan. This would enable a further dwelling to be built which could then provide housing for my three children, or elderly parents in the future should the wish to live on the property, particularly with house affordability becoming such an issue.

The Whangarei District Council is currently proposing to rezone this land as Rural Production Environment. Under this proposed zoning, both the Minor Residential Unit and Environmental Benefit provisions would be removed and because the minimum lot size for this zoning is 20ha any subdivision of my property would be a Non-Complying activity. This would compromise the ability for my children or aging parents to settle on the property in the future. The removal of the Environmental Benefit provisions also removes any incentive to protect the native bush on my property.

My property and those of the neighbouring properties to the west on Crawford Road, Tangihua Road and O'Carroll Road are life style blocks and hobby farms that were initially created through subdivision approximately 20-25 years ago and through subsequent subdivisions. The average lot size is about 2ha and although there is some orchard plantings, none of these properties fall within the self-sustaining

farming or horticulture objectives of the proposed Rural Production Environment. These properties are shown on the attached plan highlighted in orange. The total number of lots in this area is 36 over an area of 70ha (2ha/lot). Of these 36 lots, there are 34 dwellings built on these lots already with another one being built at the moment. This shows that this area is both desirable and suitable for rural living.

I believe that the Rural Production Environment is not the appropriate zoning for these properties because these properties are clearly not being used for self-sustaining farming or horticulture.

The properties are located on the northern, southern and western base of the Maungakaramea volcano and are about 1-2km by road from the Maungakaramea township. The township includes a local school, shop, sports complex and hall. The roads that these properties are served by are all sealed.

As most of these blocks are between 0.4 – 5ha in size, these lifestyle blocks and hobby farms seem to fit better within the criteria for the proposed Rural Living Environment which allows subdivision to an average lot size of 2ha. This zoning would recognise the already heavily developed nature of the land and would result in little further development of the land as the average lot size of the properties is already 2ha. I understand from a Whangarei District Council Senior Policy Planner that this area was not assessed for the proposed Rural Living Environment.

My wife and I surveyed some of the residents in the neighbourhood to see what their view was on what the appropriate zoning should be for this land. Everyone that we approached (some were not home) agreed that this area should be zoned as Rural Living. I have attached the signatures of the property owners that we spoke to. I also note that most people were either not aware of the proposed changes to the District Plan or did not believe that these plan changes would have any impact on them.

Making the area shown in the attached plan into Rural Living Environment would have negligible impact as most of the properties are heavily developed and are already in keeping with this zoning. It is also supported by the owners of the properties affected. These properties would also support the Maungakaramea township, community and school which is a desired outcome of the Rural Living Environment.

Relief Sought

- (a) That the Whangarei District Council rezone the land shown in the attached plan (highlighted in orange) as Rural Living Environment.

- (b) That the current Environmental Benefit provisions contained within the current Countryside Environment be included in the Rural Production and Rural Living Environments to encourage protection of natural areas.

PART B - Response to Planner S42A Reports

Submission 196/1 - Rural Living Environment Zoning (S42A Report Part 6 Zoning Submissions)

Three submissions were received in support of Rural Living Environment for properties in the area that I had marked (refer paragraphs 409-411 of the S42A Part 6 planning report). Although not noted in the planning report, six other landowners of the proposed area were in support of the change to Rural Living Environment (refer to the attached signed list).

The planning report acknowledged that there were many small lots that would be expected within a Rural Living Environment within this area. However, it went on to state that the soils in this area include Class 1, 2 and 3 soils which are highly productive and highly versatile. Because of this reason, the recommendation was to reject these submissions (refer paragraph 412 of the S42A Part 6 planning report).

I do not disagree that the land is productive, because it is already used for horticulture on many properties. However, the impact of changing the zoning to Rural Living Environment was not assessed by the planner. I have attached calculations which determine that changing the zoning to Rural Living Environment with a minimum lot size of 2ha would only create a potential for an additional 10 dwellings. If I assume that each of these dwellings had the maximum house size (500m²) and another 500m² for sheds and curtilage as well as a 150m x 3m wide driveway access, the total loss of horticultural land would be 1.5ha. When compared to the total land area of 70 ha, this represents a total loss of 2% of the productive land which is negligible.

Therefore, I do not agree with the recommendation to reject the proposed Rural Living Environment out of hand just because the soil type is highly productive because, as shown above, the actual impact is negligible.

In addition, many of the other areas that were deemed to be suitable for Rural Living Environment such as Glenbervie, Kara Road North and Newton Road are all on productive volcanic land that is also being used for horticulture and hobby farms. I question why the Rural Living Environment is suitable for these areas, but not the area I have proposed.

I would also argue that the character and nature of the area proposed is already in alignment with the Rural Living Environment because it consists of life style blocks and hobby farms of an average size of 2ha. This is entirely consistent with the outcomes desired by the Rural Living Environment. By trying to apply the Rural Production Environment rules on this land may result in worse outcomes than using the Rural Living Environment rules. For example, the Rural Production Environment allows up to 20% of the site to be covered in building (RPE Rule 3c), which could equate to 4000m² for a 2ha lot, and has no limit on impervious area. This could clearly result in more loss of productive soils than the Rural Living Environment rules which only allow a maximum dwelling size of 500m² (RLE Rule 4d) and has a limit of 15% impervious area (RLE Rule 5). Therefore, the Rural Living Environment is likely to result in more protection of the productive soils than the Rural Production Environment.

For these reasons, I believe the Commissioners should **accept** the proposal for the area marked in red on the attached plan to be zoned Rural Living Environment.

Submission 196/2 – Environmental Benefit (S42A Report Part 7 Rural Production Environment)

There were 10 submissions in support of the retention of the Environmental Benefit provisions in one form or another for the Rural Production Environment (refer paragraphs 210-213 of the S42A Part 7 planning report).

The planning report assessed the impact of retaining the current Environmental Benefit provisions versus removing it or amending it (a variation to the existing Environmental Benefit provisions was analysed). The issue came down to fragmentation of the rural production land due to scattered dwellings that would result in loss of productive land and additional amenity effects. This was not a desired outcome in the Regional Policy Statement. The planning report also considered that the rules in the Rural Production Environment adequately controlled clearing of native bush and destruction of indigenous wetlands. On this basis, the recommendation was to reject the Environmental Benefit provisions and keep the Rural Production Environment rules unchanged (refer paragraphs 214-224 of the S42A Part 7 planning report).

I note that protection provisions for native bush in the Rural Production Environment allow as a permitted activity the clearing of up to 500m² of vegetation if it forms a contiguous area of more than 1ha (RPE Rule 5). This also indicates that it would be permitted to remove isolated areas of native vegetation of up to 1ha. I believe that it would also be difficult to enforce the 500m² minimum rule and this would over time lead to the removal of significant areas of bush. This rule does not appear to adequately protect native vegetation.

On my property the native bush consist of mature stands of Totara forest. This is shown in the foreground of the attached aerial photo with the black lines approximately marking my property boundaries. This bush is noted as an area of interest in the Department of Conservation's "Natural Areas of Whangarei Ecological

District – Reconnaissance Survey Report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme”, 2001. I have attached a map from this report which shows the area of bush in question (I have highlighted the extents of my property in pink). This demonstrates that there is native bush worth preserving on my property. I believe that the current Environmental Benefit provisions would be the ideal incentive for areas of native bush such as this shown on my property to be protected.

The current Environmental Benefit rules allow for one 4,000m² (0.4ha) lot to be created. The loss of 0.4ha of Rural Production Environment land with a minimum lot size of 20ha equates to a loss of productive land of only 2% which is negligible. Therefore, I believe that there should be no significant concern with fragmentation of productive land or loss of productive land with such a negligible impact.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the Commissioners include provision for the current Environmental Benefit rules in the Rural Production Environment rules to incentivize the protection of native bush.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Seakins', written in a cursive style.

Mark Seakins

Print Date: 1/10/2016
Print Time: 1:02 PM



Scale: 1:11000
Original Sheet Size A4

Projection: NZGD2000 / New Zealand Transverse Mercator 2000
Bounds: 1705914.39397753,6030684.54814276
1708308.26198147,60333743.77063604

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PC85 Rural Area Plan Change

I support my property becoming RURAL LIVING ENVIRONMENT:

Name	Address	Signature
Diana George	46 Crawford Rd Mangakarama	D. George
Malcolm George	46 Crawford Rd Mangakarama	M. George
Mark Seakins	44 Crawford Rd Mangakarama	Mark Seakins
Rachel Seakins	44 Crawford Rd Mangakarama	Rachel Seakins
Eric Scott	44 Crawford Rd Mangakarama	Eric Scott
GINNY CLAYTON	20 CRAWFORD ROAD, MGK.	G. Clayton
GAVIN ANDERSON	199 TANGIHUA RD.	G. Anderson
Cathy Anderson	" "	C. Anderson
STEVEN THOMPSON	221 Tangihua Rd.	S. Thompson
Sue Thompson	301 Tangihua Rd R18.	S. Thompson
Nancy Schollum	355 Tangihua Rd. R18.	N. Schollum
Wayne Deemily	159 Tangihua Rd, R18	W. Deemily
Val & Len	159 Tangihua Rd R18	Val & Len
Meaghan Green	161 Tangihua Road R18	Meaghan Green

Whangarei District Council - Plan Change 85A-D Submission 196 - Mark Seakins

Assessment of Impact of Proposed Area of Crawford/Tangihua/O'Carroll Road Changing to RLE

Property	Area	Additional Dwellings Possible
48 Crawford Road	0.30	0
46 Crawford Road	4.24	1
44 Crawford Road	5.11	1
42 Crawford Road	4.01	1
20 Crawford Road	2.52	0
9 Crawford Road	1.20	0
Cnr Crawford Road and Tangihua Road	1.34	0
145 Tangihua Road	5.18	1
157 Tangihua Road	0.42	0
159 Tangihua Road	5.27	1
161 Tangihua Road	0.40	0
168 Tangihua Road	0.81	0
198 Tangihua Road	1.00	0
199 Tangihua Road	0.20	0
214 Tangihua Road	1.02	0
221 Tangihua Road	8.03	3
223 Tangihua Road	2.23	0
229 Tangihua Road	4.06	1
231 Tangihua Road	1.51	0
239 Tangihua Road	0.76	0
241 Tangihua Road	1.37	0
251 Tangihua Road	0.66	0
253 Tangihua Road	1.61	0
255 Tangihua Road	1.26	0
11 O'Carroll Road	0.62	0
12 O'Carroll Road	0.45	0
13 O'Carroll Road	5.51	1
14 O'Carroll Road	0.32	0
22 O'Carroll Road	0.81	0
31 O'Carroll Road	0.44	0
37 O'Carroll Road	0.40	0
41 O'Carroll Road	0.41	0
45 O'Carroll Road	0.60	0
49 O'Carroll Road	1.67	0
53 O'Carroll Road	2.02	0
67 O'Carroll Road	2.49	0
TOTAL	70.25	10
AVERAGE LOT SIZE	1.95	

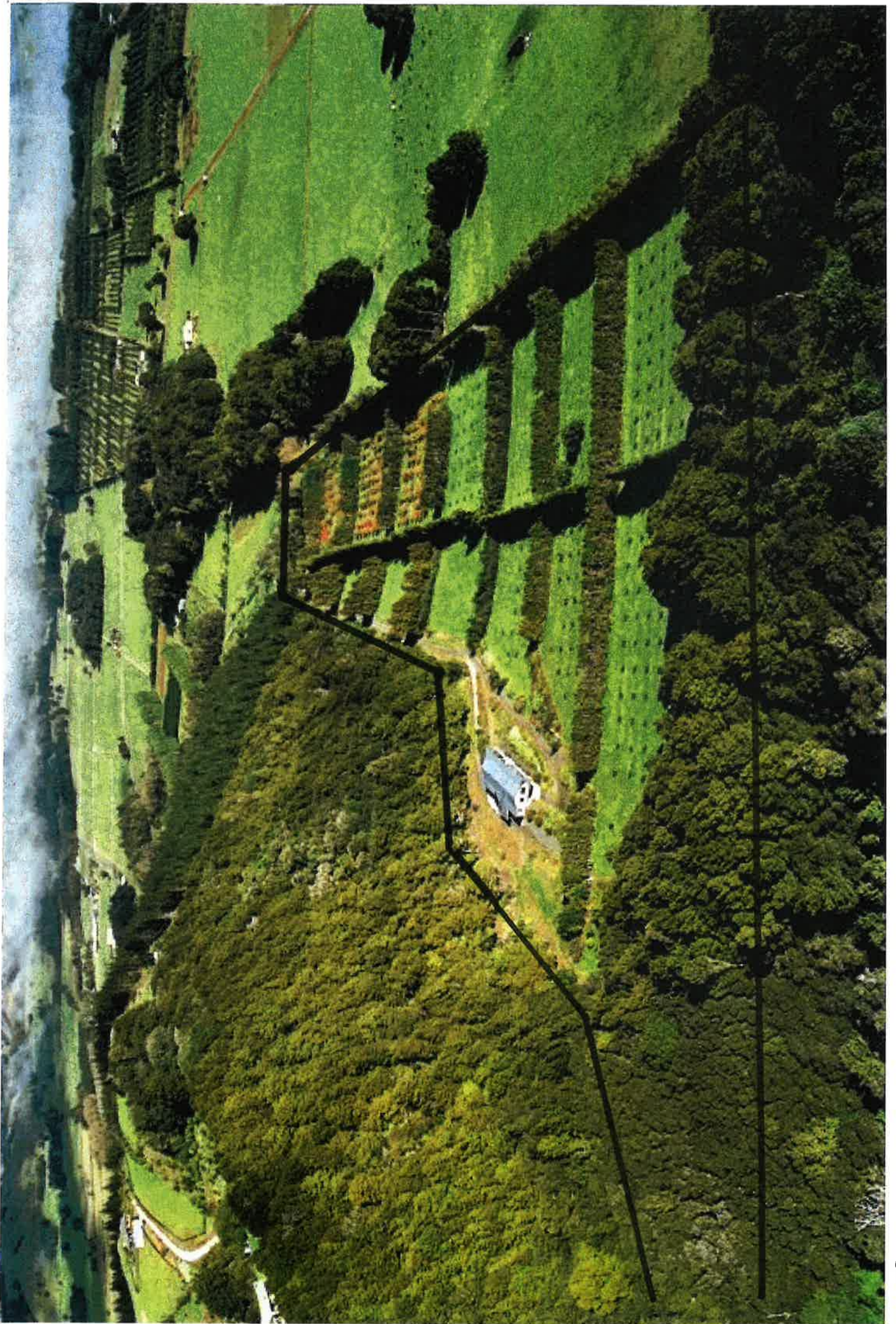
Potential Reduction in Useful Horticultural Land Area

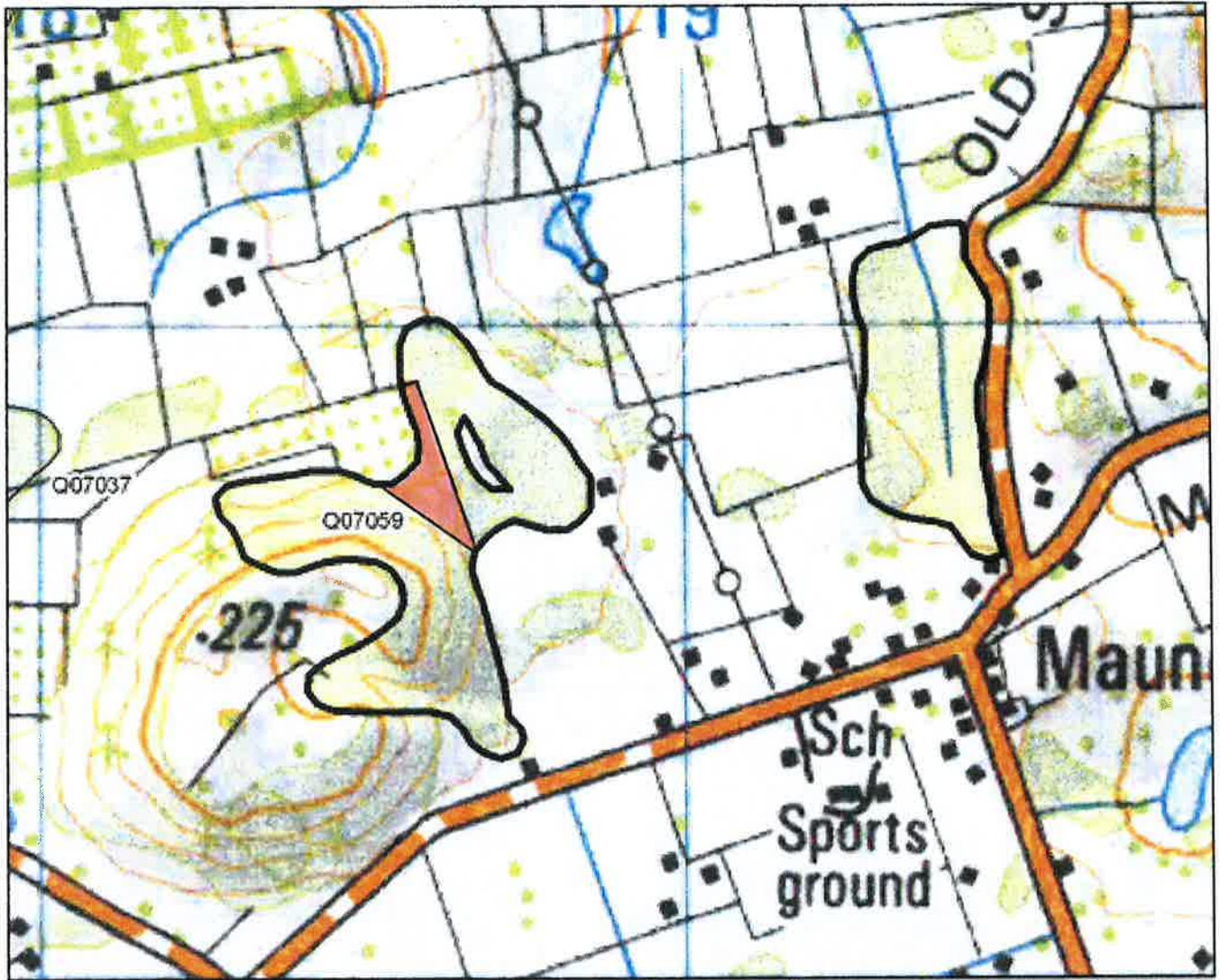
Land used for house and curtilage = Max building size = 500m², double this for house and curtilage = 1,000m²
 Land used for driveway access = 150m long x 3m wide = 450m² say 500m²
Total Land used for each extra dwelling = 1,500m²

Total Reduction in Useful Land = 1500m² per extra dwelling x 10 extra dwellings = 15,000m² of 1.5 Ha

Percentage Reduction in Useful Land = 1.5 Ha/70.25 Ha
 = 2% of the Current Productive Land Area

Therefore the loss of productive land by changing the proposed marked area to RLE is only 2%





Q07059 Maungakaremea Mountain



- S= Shrubland
- F= Forest
- W= Wetland
- E= Estuarine

