

3 Landscape

3.1 Background

This coastal headland is an important landscape feature.

3.1.1 Coastal viewpoint

Given Point Dorset was used for defence purposes in the past, it is not surprising that it is a good place for sightseeing. This is a popular, accessible viewpoint that provides good views of the harbour entrance and passing boats, Seatoun and Breaker Bay and the eastern harbour and Hutt Valley.



Looking towards Breaker Bay

3.1.2 Landscape

Over the centuries, Point Dorset has been an important geographic feature for people arriving by sea.

Oruaiti Reserve provides a green backdrop to Seatoun. On the Breaker Bay side, the undeveloped coastal escarpment contributes to the natural rugged landscape of this area.

The ridgeline has three peaks, with the highest being 58m above sea level. The seaward side of the point is steep and eroding in places.

Parts of the Point have been modified, to accommodate military use, roads and housing over the past 100 years.

A report on the Open Space features of the Point was prepared for the Council by Boffa Miskell in 2001. The report considered the landscape value of both the private and publicly owned land.

The conclusion was the Point “is a very important landform in the Wellington Harbour landscape, as it has strong natural character and defines the harbour ‘gateway’”.



Seatoun in the 1900s. Point Dorset is behind the houses and at top right is the Pass of Branda. Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: F- 18844-1/2

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 Retaining views

Many people visit Oruaiti Reserve to enjoy the views, and want them retained. To maintain these important views, there is a need to consider carefully the plant species and structures near the lookout areas.

The views also hold historic importance. For many centuries the site has been used as a lookout for defence purposes.



Path to lookout

3.2.2 Modifications to landscape

People appreciate the 'naturalness' of the area and the views of open spaces and developed places. The reserve provides an undeveloped backdrop for the surrounding suburbs and many people want the area left as it is – to retain the rugged wild coast. Some users are concerned about structures being installed at the lookout area, as this may interrupt the area's natural character.

Utilities within the reserve include a stormwater drain near the Ludlam Street entrance and a telecommunications tower. The existing telecommunications tower interrupts the ridgeline.



Telecommunications tower on the ridgeline

3.3 Objectives

- Protect the natural coastal landscape character of Oruaiti Reserve.

3.4 Policies

3.4.1 Retaining views

- Much of the grassed area around the lookout will be retained for the views and to recognise the historic importance of this site for defending the entrance to the harbour.
- Only low-growing eco-sourced native coastal plants will be planted near the lookout area.
- Signs will be provided to explain the key landmarks that can be seen from Oruaiti Reserve.

3.4.2 Modifications to landscape

- Any additional features, such as signs or structures, should aid people's enjoyment and understanding of Oruaiti Reserve, and be unobtrusive.
- The location, design and materials used for new structures will be carefully considered. No structures will be situated on the ridgeline.
- No utilities, masts or telecommunication structures will be situated on the ridgeline (see 6.2.6).