

**BEFORE THE SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Local Government Act 2002

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of a submission by B & A George and E & B Jeffs on  
Draft Rural Residential Strategy

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**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF NICOLE LAUENSTEIN FOR  
Trices Road – Prebbleton South  
11 APRIL 2014**

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## QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

1. My name is Nicole Lauenstein. I have the qualifications of Dipl. Ing Arch. and Dipl. R.U.Pl. equivalent to a Master in Architecture and a Master in Urban Design (Spatial and Environmental Planning) from the University of Kaiserslautern / Germany. I am an elected member of the Urban Design Panel in Christchurch and a member of the UDF (Urban Design Forum). Before moving to New Zealand I was a member of the BDA (German Institute of Architects).
2. I have practised as an Urban Designer and Architect for the past 15 years in Germany, Spain, Australia and New Zealand. The first 5 years I established my own architectural and urban design practice in Germany, the last 15 years I have been a director of a+urban based in Christchurch.
3. In both practices I have undertaken many projects combining the architectural and urban disciplines. Projects have been varied in scale and complexity from urban revitalisation of city centres, development of growth strategies for smaller communities, architectural buildings in the public realm and private residential projects in sensitive environments.
4. Prior to my arrival in NZ I worked for several European Architects and Urban Designers and was involved in a range of urban studies and rural area assessments for the governance of the individual federal states in Germany, investigating urban sprawl of major cities such as Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Rostock and the effect on the urban and rural character. This work included developing mechanisms and criteria to facilitate sustainable development. Other work for private clients consisted of the design of sustainable developments in sensitive areas with very stringent development guidelines.
5. Since moving to NZ I have been involved in architectural and urban design consultancy for several architects and planners including a large urban study and concept plans for the regeneration of the Walsh Bay area in Sydney with Peddle Thorpe Associates and consultancy to Boffa Miskell Christchurch on urban research and design and development for rural townships.
6. I have taught as a guest lecturer at Christchurch Polytechnic architecture and urban design and at Lincoln University Landscape

Architecture Department teaching urban design at graduate and post graduate level.

7. I have a good understanding of the local and wider Christchurch area through professional involvement in public and private Plan Changes and urban design consultancy on projects in Lincoln, Rolleston, Tai Tapu, Ohoka, Cust, Rangiora, Kaiapoi.
8. My experience includes working on growth strategies for urban and peri-urban areas including rural and urban residential developments with a mixture of densities from low, medium to high. I have prepared several urban analysis, development strategies and design concepts for urban and rural residential areas within the Canterbury region (Lincoln, Rolleston, Tai Tapu, Ohoka, Cust, Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Lake Hood, Akaroa, Ashburton)
9. Most recent urban design and architecture work includes:
  - (a) Papa Otakaro Avon River and East/North Frame concept design, Christchurch Central City
  - (b) Kirimoko residential development in Wanaka Stage 2
  - (c) Urban analysis and strategic plans related to Selwyn District Council Rural Residential Strategy (RRS) submissions
  - (d) Masterplans for Greenfield development in Lincoln (Flemington)
  - (e) Mixed Use development on Hagley Avenue, Christchurch
  - (f) New Tait Building and Masterplan, north west Christchurch
  - (g) Several commercial and residential 'rebuild' projects in Christchurch
  - (h) Master Plans for Inner City block infill and brown field conversions in Christchurch.
  - (i) ODP's for rebuild projects in the Christchurch CBD
10. Although this is a proceeding under the Local Government Act 2002, I nonetheless confirm that I have prepared this evidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses (Environment Court Consolidated Practice Note, November 2011). The evidence I will present is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am

relying on information provided by another party. I have not knowingly omitted facts of information that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

## **SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- **Background**
- **Introduction**
- **Site and location**
- **Urban and Rural Context**
  - a. Neighbouring developments
  - b. Prebbleton urban and rural context / development and structure
  - c. Trices Road as a boundary
- **Development strategy/proposal**
  - a. Overarching structure
  - c. Landscape buffers, edge treatment reverse sensitivity
  - c. Benefits of a joint proposal
  - d. Strengthening the urban form of Prebbleton
- **Response to officers Report**
- **Conclusion**

## **BACKGROUND**

11. Due to my involvement in rural residential and urban developments in the wider Christchurch area, through participation Proposed Change 1 to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (PC1), Plan Change 7 to the Selwyn District Plan (Rolleston and Lincoln) and several private plan changes, I have gained a good insight into the various aspects that contribute to the urban development patterns of the Townships in the Selwyn District. I have continued to observe the increased growth of Prebbleton since the Christchurch earthquakes. And through several visits to the Site and the Township I have gained a good understanding of the current and future urban and rural form, and the



resulting development potential of the Site and its relationship to Prebbleton.

12. I was engaged by the group of landowners represented by the George and Jeffs families a few months ago to investigate the development options for the roughly 28.5 ha area (the Site) south of Prebbleton and to provide a strategy how to best develop the Site as rural residential properties within the overall framework of the Draft Rural Residential Strategy (RRS), the Prebbleton Structure Plan (PSP) and the potential future growth pattern of Prebbleton.
13. A site and context analysis was undertaken as well as a study of the Prebbleton Structure Plan, the Draft RRS and other relevant urban and planning requirements/documents to ensure the proposal will integrate into the wider context and future planning of Prebbleton Township.

#### **ANALYSIS, METHODOLOGY AND BEST PRACTICE**

14. In my analysis I have taken the 'Best Practice guidelines' from the Ministry for the Environment into consideration such as:
  - Urban design protocol
  - Urban design toolkit
  - Creating great places to live work and play, liveable urban environments: process strategy and action
  - People places and spaces: a design guide for urban New Zealand

As well as the guiding principles and outcomes of the RRS and Land Use Recovery Plan (LURP).

15. The urban design protocol identifies a combination of design processes and outcomes known as the "7 C's" - seven essential design qualities that create quality urban design: context, connectivity, character, choice, creativity, custodianship and collaboration. Although they are not the only contributors that make up the complexity of an urban fabric, they are nationally recognized principles and provide a good general checklist of qualities that need to be considered to achieve quality urban outcomes.
16. The PSP provides important information on the wider context of Prebbleton with regard to all aspects of growth management such as

transport, housing, open space, rural residential activities, culture and heritage, connections to Christchurch, integrated landuse, storm water treatment, connectivity of green and movement networks and sustainability in the widest sense.

17. I have also taken guidance from the references to urban design matters in the LURP and the RRS. In particular the RRS provides clear guiding principles and outcomes for rural residential development and its relationship to existing townships, as well as location criteria (appendix 1), discussion of urban and rural character and values, growth related issues analysis and a variety of relevant urban design and land development matters.

## **INTRODUCTION - RURAL RESIDENTIAL**

18. The LURP only considers the earthquake recovery period to 2028 to manage rural residential development, the RRS however, needs to take a longer-term approach in addressing the peri-urban areas and consider the long-term environment post 2028. Thinking within time frames of 14 years is a very short timeframe in the context of urban and planning matters and will not suffice to address matters such as urban form and consolidation of urban and rural land uses which establish over longer periods of time.
19. The RRS is an important document to manage rural residential (RR) development in the Selwyn district. There has been an evolution of documents and there are variety of references and directions in the LURP and Chapter 6 of the RPS to be taken into account but in essence it all comes down to managing rural residential development in particular in peri-urban areas for very clear and good reasons:
  - allow a range of choices of housing types
  - avoid inefficient use of land and infrastructure
  - protect future urban expansion options
  - manage potential conflict with rural character and rural activities
  - monitor supply and uptake of rural residential activity
  - consolidate rural residential development and avoid dispersal

20. The RRS has identified several Rural Residential typologies, has correctly chosen the most appropriate typology for peri-urban areas Peri-urban rural residential type and decided on a selected few locations where these should be implemented in the next 5 years until the next review. This in itself is a first step forward introducing an appropriate type of rural residential development in peri-urban land but does not really manage the rural residential issues highlighted earlier. It leaves all the remaining peri-urban land unmanaged under the same regime of the 4ha block as before which will continue to cause the issues the RRS is meant to tackle.
21. If the RRS is to really manage RR development it should take the opportunity and responsibility to address all peri-urban land within the area identified within the LURP with the aim to guide rural residential development where suitable, to preserve urban growth paths and constrain urban and rural residential development where this is required.
22. The Officer's Report in paragraph 1.13 introductory statement sums up the main outcome the strategy aims to achieve.
- “One of the primary outcomes that SDC is aiming to achieve through the Strategy is to ensure that rural residential areas are able to be integrated with urban forms to achieve servicing efficiencies and community outcomes. Of equal importance is to ensure that rural residential locations do not:*
- *undermine future consolidated settlement patterns*
  - *derogate the function, form and character of townships*
  - *hinder future residential growth paths*
  - *reduce rural amenity, diminish the productive capacity by intensifying larger rural land holdings or to undermine rural or the rural environment and adverse reverse sensitivity effects”*
23. Peri urban land is defined as the land immediately around the perimeter of urban settlement. It is the area under most development pressure from both, urban and rural residential developments as it offers logical growth paths, can be connected to the urban infrastructure, allows for good access and connectivity and provides space right at the interface between urban and rural environments. At the same time the peri-urban area has to perform other important urban functions. It needs to provide a discernible edge to the urban form, which in many cases is not well articulated and it needs to create a buffer to the rural activities to manage reverse sensitivities which cannot be addressed within the confined space of smaller urban lots. These, sometimes conflicting, requirements make development in the



peri-urban areas more challenging but also makes appropriate management of these areas most important.

#### **4ha Rural residential lots - benefits and issues**

24. The peri-urban land around townships is zoned Inner Plains (IP), which allows 4 ha lots to be established as of right so they are the natural fallback position for all peri-urban land. However, 4 ha lots are neither rural nor residential, they fall into a category that puts the majority of the 4ha land into a holding pattern. The size makes agricultural use unsustainable, but makes them at the same time too large for residential use, which tends to establish itself at around a maximum of 2000-3000 m<sup>2</sup> all inclusive - dwelling and associated access and domestic curtelage. In summary it often is a waste of productive land.
25. As a result 4ha properties adjoining the urban limit of a township where services are available are often under pressure to further subdivide to make the remaining land viable and efficient. 4ha lots that are more remote from rural towns tend to make better use of the remaining land and experience less pressure to subdivide.
26. 4 hectare blocks are very difficult to intensify in density and retrofit with additional roading and infrastructure whilst integrating existing dwellings, which has been shown in several cases in the district and is currently the case with ODP 11 in Rolleston.
27. Depending on access, dwelling location and orientation setbacks etc some 4ha lots are able to adapt to further infill but the majority are not set out to provide good links across boundaries to neighbours and create severe problems in connectivity. 4ha lots are by nature rural in character and mostly 'self-contained'. They establish independent of each other at different times creating an introverted environment. If they are to be further subdivided to accommodate growth, they struggle to integrate and tend to create many cul-de-sacs, easements and back properties as each property tries to either maximise their yield whilst avoiding legal conflicts and time delays and others try to protect their rural outlook, status quo and/or future ability to subdivide. As such they are unsuitable to accommodate future urban growth paths without compromising.



28. The 4 hectare block does also not assist in curbing urban sprawl, as the remaining mostly 'unused' land is often an incentive for owners to further subdivide their land to maximise its development potential resulting in piecemeal developments.
29. In para 4.39 section 4 of the Draft RRS it states: *The Commissioners found that there was a clear indication from the evidence<sup>1</sup> presented that people were seeking one of the following two categories of land holding for rural residential purposes:*  
*(a) parcels ranging from between 0.5 to 2ha that could support the running of a few animals and/or an extended garden or orchard*  
 OR  
*(b) parcels ranging from between 0.2 to 1ha for a 'larger lot' lifestyle*  
*The reasons given for the preference for either of the two above categories were that the people seeking the property tended to have off-site employment, and had time constraints that precluded their ability to maintain larger land holdings.*
30. This is a clear indication that where peri-urban environments directly adjoin urban limits the peri-urban rural residential development is the more desirable typology and this applies particularly to Prebbleton due to its proximity to Christchurch.

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence on PC1 – Proposed Change 1 to the RPS.

### Peri-urban rural residential - benefits and issues

31. The RRS discusses a variety of rural residential typologies such as hamlets, clusters and farm parks – these are either smaller independent nodes or enclaves as part of rural/farming environments. They are surrounded by large areas of rural land and are not 'attached' or in proximity to urban areas, which makes them inappropriate for peri-urban land. The RRS defines peri urban as:
  - *"Peri-urban environments occur where rural and urban activities merge at the interface between Townships and the countryside"*
32. This typology of peri-urban rural residential development provides a more appropriate and sustainable rural residential environment using less land whilst offering the benefits that people seek when opting for a rural residential lifestyle. The figures below (RRS page 25. Fig. 8 and 9) show the gradual decreasing density distribution from urban to rural and places the peri-urban rural residential developments with a density of 2 hh/ha at the interface between rural and urban environs.

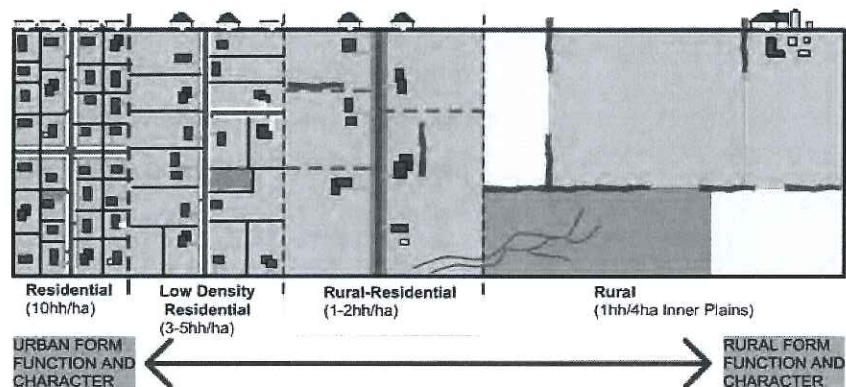


Figure 8: Land use spectrum

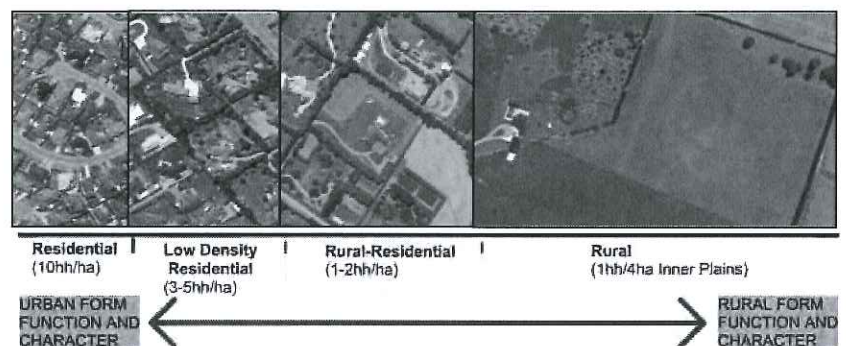


Figure 9: Photos illustrating the land use spectrum

33. The RRS concludes in section 5 (5.3) that ‘the peri-urban form of rural residential development that integrates with Townships is the most sustainable typology within the area of the district that is subject to the LURP’, as it will deliver the following benefits:

- *proximity to Townships promotes social wellbeing through the ability to access open space reserves, community facilities, employment opportunities and social networks*
- *peri-urban nodes are better able to provide integrated living environments that reflect the peace, quiet, ‘openness’, ‘ruralness’ and privacy that residents expect*
- *peri-urban nodes are better able to deliver efficiencies in the provision of infrastructure due to increased proximity to reticulated services*
- *sensitive gateways to Townships are able to be avoided, with there being opportunities to integrate rural residential areas into both the rural and urban environments through semi-formal links, riparian margins, ecological corridors and ‘greenspace’ networks*
- *the absence of topographical and natural features to screen intensified development results in alternative typologies that are severed from settlements having a greater risk of adversely affecting the visual distinctiveness of the open rural landscape through the ‘domestication’ of productive rural land holdings*
- *peri-urban nodes can take advantage of definitive boundaries to manage growth and reduce the risk of urban sprawl, with appropriate location selection enabling long term residential growth paths to be preserved*
- *appropriate densities, layouts, development controls and mitigation measures can deliver the anticipated rural residential character, which is distinct from conventional urban environments or rural land holdings*
- *localised natural features, greenbelt buffers, design elements and interface treatments are able to make rural residential areas distinctly different from rural and urban areas and to reduce the blurring of the rural/urban boundary of Townships*
- *typologies that are consolidated and integrated with settlements are better able to avoid ‘ribbon’ development, adverse reverse sensitivity effects with productive rural land uses and strategic infrastructure and to assist in achieving compact urban forms for existing residential settlements*



34. In these statements the RRS introduces the concept that peri-urban rural residential development is not only more desirable than 4ha blocks at the perimeter of townships but it also introduces the concept of using peri-urban rural residential development to contain urban sprawl, achieving a compact urban form as well consolidating rural residential development.
35. The RRS notes that from an urban perspective peri-urban rural residential developments require connectivity, access and circulation patterns that are to some extent similar to the adjacent urban networks but have a more generous size/spacing and more rural feel and character. Peri-urban rural residential developments therefore have the ability to structurally integrate to a sufficient level so as to become part of the built fabric and to assist in defining the urban form of a township. This connectivity to the urban environment is what differentiates this denser type of rural residential form from the more independent larger 4ha lot.
36. Whilst peri urban rural residential developments can structurally integrate into the urban fabric of a township they still remain distinctly different in visual and physical amenity and character. As such they are well suited to constrain urban sprawl where discernible boundaries to urban development are missing unless they are intentionally designed to accommodate further infill (future proofing).
37. To clarify this point; there are two different categories of peri urban rural residential:
  - A)** Peri-urban development that is intended to create a clear boundary to urban development in a sense creating a 'developed RR buffer' this type of peri urban RR provides:
    - An underlying structure (roading, services, lot layout and connectivity) that connects the development to the township but does not allow further physical connections to the rural surroundings to discourage sprawl.
    - Creates clear landscape buffers to the rural interface to mitigate potential reverse sensitivities.
    - Supports or creates clear gateways into the township.

**B)** Peri-urban development that is intended to preserve a future urban growth path for the rural Township provides:

- An underlying structure (roading, services, lot layout and connectivity) that connects the development to the township and is future proofed, so it does allow further physical connections to its surroundings and residential intensification to an urban density should this be required.
- Interim landscape buffers to the rural interface to mitigate potential reverse sensitivities.

38. The RRS has not identified these inherent characteristics of the peri-urban rural development form and has therefore restricted the use of peri-urban development to small pockets where no future growth paths have been identified and discernible boundaries to the urban form are already established. This results in the majority of the peri-urban land that is under the most development pressure remaining unmanaged.

39. Using this rural residential development type to its full potential gives the planning authority tools to properly direct urban growth into the most appropriate locations on the perimeter of rural townships and also gives clear direction to landowners in peri urban areas how their land is to be treated and what type of development is to occur should they choose to develop. Providing this level of certainty does not 'open up' all peri-urban land for development it just indicates what type of peri urban development to consider. Plan Changes, ODPs and other requirements still apply and give the Council control over timing and other detail.

40. From an urban design perspective this level of certainty will assist with the strengthening of township boundaries, containing urban sprawl and guiding development. For that reason all peri-urban land that meets the criteria below should be included in the RRS **in principle** to ensure it is managed appropriately – peri-urban land that:

- has clearly been identified as an urban growth path (i.e. structure plan)
- is a potential growth path for future urban development based on the preferred long-term growth strategy and preferred urban form
- needs to be developed to create a preferred urban form

- has no discernible boundaries towards the urban environment where urban development needs to be constrained and is therefore vulnerable to urban growth pressure
  - has no obvious constraints to development (i.e. flooding geotech issues) and is therefore vulnerable to urban growth pressure
41. Proactively managing the vulnerable peri-urban area is prudent, and good urban planning and best urban design practice. Identifying peri-urban land 'in principle' for peri urban rural residential development, unless strong discernible boundaries already exist between the rural and urban environment, would enable the council to differentiate the peri-urban development from the standard 4ha rural residential development and utilize it to either future proof existing growth paths or curtail urban growth. Both will assist with the aim of strengthening the urban form.
42. The additional benefits of the peri-urban rural residential form are that it will provide the more desirable smaller sized rural residential lifestyle sections in a more consolidated form with less urban dispersal in the long term.

### **Urban Growth and Urban Form**

43. As both of these terms Growth and Form are frequently used in the RRS and other planning documents I consider it important to explain them from an urban design perspective which needs to be taken into consideration when planning documents are to guide the physical and visual urban and rural outcomes.
44. Urban growth is dynamic and in part a reactive process. Growth paths can to some extent be pre-planned through large scheme and structure plans, ODPs etc but also occur naturally in the form of gradual expansion, infill and intensification. There are different types of growth:
- larger Greenfield developments
  - gradual linear and/or concentric expansion of a settlement
  - infill/ intensification of existing areas
  - landuse change i.e. Brownfield developments.



45. All these growth patterns combined form part of a healthy urban growth strategy. Greenfield growth tends to be of a more speculative nature (development driven), is often of a larger scale and 'starts from scratch' providing new facilities and resources. Natural growth patterns tend to be more gradual and more complex combining many parameters such as availability, location, quality, affordability, etc - but in particular proximity and connectivity, as they tend to build on, or extend existing features and services versus building new ones. Brownfield conversion is in itself not really growth but change of use. It can however result in the increase of residential activity – similar to infill and intensification. Depending on scale it builds on existing features and services and /or introduces new facilities and resources.
46. Desirable urban growth pathways are generally easier to identify with certainty but are much more difficult to manage and implement with certainty, as they rely on the willingness of private owners to develop, the acceptance and demand of the market and many other constraining factors (financial, infrastructure, time to name a few). I am not an expert in market trends so will not comment on this part of growth behaviour nor am I sufficiently knowledgeable in the technicalities of financing and servicing growth. However, urban growth paths will always put pressure on the land that is closest to its current urban limit - peri-urban land, as it is the most natural and efficient way to grow unless specific discernible boundaries or constraints exist.
47. Structure plans are the main tools to manage the anticipated growth and this has been done for Prebbleton, Lincoln and Rolleston where the development pressure is the highest in the district. But these Structure Plans by their nature are urban plans and only address matters concerning the land within the new urban limits. They do not address the land on the other side of the line, the peri-urban land but rely on the peri-urban land to work in partnership and provide the necessary response such as forming a boundary, dealing with reverse sensitivity, allowing for future growth, forming gateways etc.

### **Urban Form**

48. There is no one form that fits all. On flat terrain urban form is often concentric as it maximises efficiency, achieves 'proximity' and

connectivity but there are many variables that affect the urban form, natural features, economics, hazards and constraints, planning regimes, ideologies and many more. Albeit slow, urban form is also dynamic and changes in response to events, growth patterns and major planning changes. Although it is to some extent dynamic, urban form should always be legible, discernible and as compact as possible to remain efficient.

49. Although cities and townships with a good urban form share many common elements, every place has its own distinct characteristics and its urban form needs to be assessed on its own merit within its context.
50. The one thing that all urban form has in common is that it needs to be legible and consolidated and for that it requires limits, boundaries or edges. For these boundaries to be legible they need to be defined. This naturally occurs through either strong natural features which in themselves are boundaries (i.e. a mountain, a river, the coastline) or smaller changes in the environment which become thresholds that need to be crossed/passed to go from one to the other (i.e. a stream, a contour change and strong vertical elements such as trees and dense vegetation against uninterrupted open space). Abrupt change and contrast are the two elements that create boundaries and are most successful at defining and containing urban form.
51. A distinct change in the character of development can also create such a contrast, change or threshold. Peri-urban rural residential developments have the ability to create such distinctly different environments. Whilst they can connect physically to the township, it is important that they provide their own distinctive rural character which differentiates them from the urban environment and assists in the creation of gateways/thresholds from rural to urban.
52. These statements introduce the concept that peri-urban rural residential development is not only more desirable than 4ha blocks at the perimeter of townships but it also introduces the concept of using PURR to contain urban sprawl and assist with achieving compact urban form. The main question for this Site is whether a purpose designed peri-urban rural residential development is a more appropriate format than the standard 4ha rural residential

development to contain urban sprawl and whether Trices Road is a discernible and strong enough boundary to contain the urban form and growth patterns of the Prebbleton Township.

## **SITE, LOCATION AND CONTEXT**

53. The Site has not been identified as a preliminary peri-urban rural residential site by the RRS, but it meets many if not all of the location criteria for the placement of peri-urban RR development. The site directly adjoins the residential areas and is well connected with the centre of Prebbleton.
54. The main question for this Site is whether classifying the land as suitable for peri-urban rural residential development is a more appropriate way than the standard 4ha rural residential fall back position to:
  - assist in the retention of the urban form and character of Prebbleton implementing the PSP
  - contain urban sprawl to the south
  - form a discernible and permanent boundary to the south along Trices road
  - form a discernible and permanent boundary to the rural environment to the south that can address reverse sensitivities
  - form a gateway or threshold at the southern approach into and out of the township along Birchs Road
  - consolidate rural residential development
55. In the remaining part of my evidence I will explain why and how peri-urban rural residential development is the most appropriate way forwards for this Site to form a discernible southern boundary and address the concerns related to urban sprawl and urban form in Prebbleton.

**Site and location** - Refer to graphic supplement GS1 location plan



56. The group owns approximately 28.5 ha of land in 8 titles located east of Birches road between Trices Road and Hamptons Road. The Site is currently zoned Rural Inner Plains and is adjoining the LZ to the north. It is mainly used as lifestyle blocks of varying size (2ha - 8.5ha) with limited rural activities (keeping horses, horticulture gardens, yards and paddocks for winterfeed). There are 9 dwellings distributed throughout the Site with access coming off either Hamptons or Trices Road.
57. Within the context of Prebbleton this is an average sized landholding under multiple ownership with the intent to work together to create a cohesive, coordinated and comprehensively designed peri urban-rural residential development. The aim is to avoid piecemeal developments of the small individual sites, which could result in isolated one-off introverted or gated communities lacking in connectivity; and to provide a strong, long-term boundary to the south of Prebbleton through appropriate development and a strong landscaping buffer.

#### **Context – immediate neighbours**

Refer to graphic supplement GS2 context plan

58. NORTH – Trices Road to the north of the Site between Springs and Birchs Road is flanked by several 8000m<sup>2</sup> blocks to the south and smaller 3000m<sup>2</sup>-4000m<sup>2</sup> lifestyle blocks to the north. Dwellings are either visually hidden behind large hedges or post and rail fencing towards the road. Directly opposite the Site Stonebridge Way leads into a low-density residential area with urban lot sizes ranging from 800 to 2000m<sup>2</sup>. Further to the east along Trices Road the pattern of smaller lifestyle sized blocks continues along both sides of the Road with a boundary landscaping of varying size and density including some open style fencing allowing clear views onto the rural residential dwellings. The road itself is of a rural nature without formed footpaths and grassed shoulders. There is however a peculiar anomaly to this rural character in proximity to Birchs Road intersection where a formed footpath gives the northern part of Trices Road an urban character which is further emphasized by typical 2.3m high suburban fencing dwelling setbacks in some properties of less than 7m and several domestic garden sheds at the boundary and other urban motifs.
59. Birches Road creates a direct connection to the Prebbleton Town centre. Stonebridge Way allows for good connections to the urban

neighbours and direct links to the Prebbleton Reserve with access to sports fields and other recreational facilities.

60. EAST - To the east the Site adjoins other rural residential properties of similar size and nature as the lots within the Site stretching all the way to Tosswill Road.
61. Overhead power lines and large pylons are located 360m from the southeast corner and can be seen from selected viewpoints within the Site but do not feature prominently due to the well established vegetation.
62. SOUTH - Hamptons Road to south of the Site is unsealed. It is a dead end road providing access for 4 rural dwellings and a large horse farm and training track that stretches along the entire southern edge of the Site. A narrow stream meanders through this southern area.
63. WEST - Birchs Road runs along the western boundary of the Site. At the lower portion the edge to the road reserve is planted with dense trees creating a tall and deep buffer to the road. Towards Trices Road this edge gradually lowers to the standard rural hedge, which features prominently in Prebbleton and gives the township a unique character.
64. Further to the west the triangle between Trices, Birchs and Hamptons Roads has already been developed as lifestyle blocks along Trices Road and Birchs Road (approx 9 dwellings and 5 additional structures, some are related to the MED facilities on the corner of Birchs and Hamptons Road). The area identified as a preliminary periurban rural residential location by the Draft RRS is the subject of a private plan change application (Plan Change 36). It includes 12.3 ha and proposes an additional 17-18 periurban rural residential lots.
65. The Birchs Road and Hamptons Road intersection creates a natural gateway into Prebbleton with clusters of mature trees on both sides of Birchs Road. Hamptons Road is also flanked by mature trees creating a strong vertical 'wall' and a discernible edge.

### **Prebbleton urban and rural context / development and structure**

Refer to graphic supplement GS3 – GS6



66. Past growth has seen urban ribbon expansion to the north and south along Springs Road and particular pressure for large sections to the northwest and the southeast, which has stretched the small Township. This is mainly due to its proximity to Christchurch. The City itself has very little room left for lifestyle blocks, which makes Prebbleton the most desirable location for a rural residential lifestyle.
67. 4ha RR lifestyle blocks have also gradually proliferated the rural environment around Prebbleton. The PSP (pre-earthquake) has consequently guided urban growth towards the east and west to counteract the ribbon development and correct the urban form back to a more concentric shape, as well as identifying key issues that need to be considered to ensure that Prebbleton achieves a consolidated urban form, retains its unique rural township character and maintains separation from Christchurch.
- *Large sections and high quality housing have been identified as contributing to the character of Prebbleton. The section sizes are quite generous in comparison to those in the newer urban areas of Christchurch. Section size has a significant effect on the character of a place because it affects the size and form of houses and the gaps between them. Lower density development can feel more spacious and imposing, whereas higher density development can feel more enclosed and intimate. Section size is not however a determinant of the quality of housing. However, this must be assessed against the need to curb the outward sprawl of the city and maintain separation between Prebbleton and its rural surrounds.*
68. There is no concern about coalescence with Lincoln to the south, which is more than 4km away. The main issue to the south of Prebbleton is:
- the lack of a discernible boundary to contain the township and to avoid development gradually eroding the contrast between rural and urban character and landscape; and
  - the lack of clear gateways or thresholds into the township from the south, east and west.
69. The RRS identifies Hamptons Road east of Springs Road and Trices Road as key to the formation of the edge to Prebbleton. Hamptons Road is still a discernible boundary as it has very limited development to the south and long open views across pastoral land. The northern side of Hamptons Road presents a very different landscape character with layers of tall shelterbelts allowing only selected short views into



the block. It is this visual and physical contrast that makes Hamptons Road a discernible boundary.

70. Trices Road by comparison is not a discernible boundary. The stretch between Springs and Birchs Road has established hedges creating a distinctive streetscape hiding the dwellings from view. But this in itself is not sufficient to create a discernible boundary as the remaining part of the road from Birchs Road up to the eastern edge of the Site features a confusing arrangement of urban and rural characteristics on the northern side and varying open and closed edge treatments on the southern side. This results in an inconsistent approach undermining the legibility of a clear urban edge and thus the ability of Trices Road to provide a discernible boundary. The combination of inconsistent development typology along the northern side of the Road and incoherent street edge treatment on both sides of the Road allows the more urban development to the north to merge with the rural developments to the south blurring the boundary and weakening the contrast between these development typologies.
71. With Trices Road being to some extent compromised as a discernible boundary it falls to the land south of Trices Road to provide this. However, the rural landscape characteristic to the south of Trices Road does not offer a strong landscape feature to aid in the contrast between rural and urban landscape. The small waterway that meanders to the south could be strengthened to become a stronger landscape feature and evolve into a natural boundary but in my opinion it does not provide a suitable boundary, as it would extend the peri-urban development too far to the south and east. The power lines and pylons to the southeast provide a visible structure and most likely an impediment to development but do not constitute a discernible boundary.
72. As a result there is no existing discernible boundary available to work with to the south of Trices Road and it falls to the Proposed Site to provide boundaries to the urban and rural environments to constrain further sprawl.
73. In addition to strengthening the urban form or as the PSP states *'uphold the urban limit and ensure rural residential development does not lead to a blurring of the urban/rural distinction'*, the following are matters

expressed in the PSP that are either directly relevant to the Site or are a matter where the Site can assist in achieving the desired outcome.

- *Creating a sensitive urban edge.*
- *Avoiding reverse sensitivity at the rural/urban boundary.*
- *Potential for and impact of, rural-residential development.*
- *Providing an alternative route for the rail trail through the township.*
- *Potential for a circular walking route.*
- *Entry features at the entrances to the village.*
- *Mix of homes of different types and tenures, which support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes*

74. A final matter to consider is the extent of peri urban rural residential development around the perimeter of Prebbleton. The 2 key limiting factors from an urban design perspective are:

- The need to avoid coalescence with Christchurch in combination with achieving a concentric urban form.
- The limitations to the growth of the commercial and community support structures in the town centre and their ability to cater to the needs of a growing population.

## **DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL / OPTIONS**

Refer to graphic supplement GS7 RRS Plan

75. The Site is large enough to generate a comprehensive and cohesive development as the owners have decided to work together to provide the best possible outcome. The following paragraphs investigate the benefits and issues related to the different development options. As the previous paragraphs stated, the most important role the Site plays in the context of the urban form of Prebbleton is:

- To provide a discernible boundary to the urban environment as well as to the rural environment
- To contain urban and rural sprawl to the south
- To create a distinctive character across the site
- To assist in the creation of clear gateways along Birchs Road and Trices Road

- To address potential reverse sensitivity matters to the rural environment
- To discourage further intensification within the site in the future.

**‘doing nothing’ / preserving the standard 4ha Rural residential lots - benefits and issues**

76. ‘Doing nothing’ by default equates to 4ha rural residential development occurring in those blocks that are large enough to do so. The two larger central properties which make up approximately 70% of the Site would be able to accommodate more development resulting in further uncoordinated development extending into the inner plains and all the associated issues of loss of rural landscape values, urban residential sprawl and servicing inefficiencies etc. But most importantly it will not assist in providing a discernible boundary to the south and the desire to further subdivide will remain in this periurban environment.

**Future proofing**

77. Future proofing the Site for urban intensification is not desirable and should be actively avoided in order to create a strong long-term ‘Peri-urban rural residential buffer’ along the south of Trices Road that is capable of constraining the urban expansion of Prebbleton. This is particularly important to achieve a consolidated urban form and to ensure that Prebbleton remains a distinctive rural township.

**PERI-URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE SITE**

Refer to graphic supplement GS7 and GS8 peri urban concept

78. A design strategy has been prepared to show how a peri-urban rural residential development on the Site can achieve the principles and outcomes of the RRS and PSP better than a 4ha default development. The following key principles and outcomes were addressed
- Constraining / urban sprawl to assist in the consolidation of the urban form of Prebbleton:
    - a design that creates a distinctly different character to the existing development to the north and distinctly different to the rural area to the south



- retaining existing landscape features in particular trees / and shelterbelts
  - rural road typology within the development
  - single storey houses to retain a low profile
  - screen dwellings from street view via vegetation and
  - Strengthening Trices Road to become a threshold between urban and peri urban environments:
    - continuing the edge treatment along Trices Road that already exists between Springs and Birchs Roads along its entire length.
    - Limiting individual entry points off Trices Road
  - Implementing appropriate edge treatment to the rural environment to create a strong buffer between rural and residential activities that is capable of mitigating reverse sensitivities
    - provide generous landscape buffers along the eastern and southern edge
  - Assist in the formation of visual and physical gateways and thresholds into the township at strategic locations along the road approaches into Prebbleton along Trices Road and along Birches Road
  - Contribute to the implementation of the wider vision of the township as per Structure Plan, which could include rail trail, walkway, views to Port Hills along Trices Road, connections to the township.
79. To ensure the Site is developed in a congruous and comprehensive manner across the various titles and multiple ownership specific legal and planning mechanisms will be developed addressing the following matters:
- 'Contributions' to retain and further develop a strong and extensive landscaped southern buffer to assist in the creation of a discernible new boundary
  - Shared internal open spaces and stormwater treatment
  - Retention of existing vegetation in particular hedges and trees

- Covenants re landscape treatment to achieve a rural characteristic
- Road setbacks and coherent rural edge treatment to the block
- Shared main road access and reduction in individual access points off Trices Road
- Retention of the edge treatment along Birchs Road
- Walkway connection through the site
- Maintain key views to rural land

## OFFICERS REPORT

80. The inclusion of the nominated sites are opposed by the Officer's Report for the following reasons:

*Council's Strategic Asset Manager Utilities has identified that significant network upgrades for water and wastewater would be required to service the land to the south of Hamptons and Trices Roads precluding development to the south of these roads will go some way to protecting the southern gateways to the Township and avoid elongating Prebbleton further south along Springs Road. It will also achieve a strong demarcation between rural and urban forms of development, and in doing so, will protect the rural amenity contrast and outlook valued by the community and expressed in the Prebbleton Structure Plan. Rural residential densities could be utilised as a means to restrict residential sprawl south of Hamptons and Trents Road, to avoid the long-term coalescence of Prebbleton with Lincoln to the south. However, there are few limits to growth in the southerly direction, with there being a risk that rural residential densities could significantly undermine the rural amenity contrast and distinction between rural and urban forms, while compromising the productive capacity of rural zoned land (refer to RRS13 Appendix 1 – Rural Residential Form, Function & Character and Landscape Values and Prebbleton Urban Form & Growth Management Locations Criteria and Appendix 2 – Map 24)*

The distinction between the urban and rural form along Trices Road is already compromised and cannot be regained. Further 4ha developments with additional access points and compartmentalisation

will continue this process. A comprehensive design approach for the entire block will allow the creation of the important southern boundary and push the dwellings towards the northern parts of the site aiding in the legibility of the urban form. Consolidating the access points on Trices Road into a single road access will allow the edge treatment along the south to be treated as a coherent single large block in keeping with this unique rural characteristic of Prebbleton. The ownership structure makes this block inefficient productive agricultural landuse.

81. Trices and Hamptons Road form a relatively strong limit to contain residential and rural residential growth from elongating the urban form further south; with the SDP identifying a need to achieve a concentric consolidated urban form under Policy B4.3.6550. I believe further rural residential growth south of Hamptons and Trices Road to be inconsistent with this policy and the "Preferred growth area" included in Appendix 31 of the SDP, with the Conifer Grove block being supported on a preliminary basis for inclusion Strategy as it already comprising a portion of Living 2 zoned land and being contained by Hamptons Road to the south (refer to RRS13 Appendix 1 – Prebbleton Urban Form & Growth Management Locations Criteria Appendix 2 – Map 24)

As discussed in my evidence Hamptons Road does provide a strong limit but Trices Road does not – particularly along the front of the Site and towards the east Trices Road is ill defined as a boundary due to the existing development and the edge treatment of the road itself blurring the characteristics of urban and rural. The proposed strategy for the Site deliberately and appropriately addresses this concern.

Constraining urban sprawl will significantly assist in achieving and maintaining a concentric urban form.

The conifers Grove development should it be included will be well confined but will push the development pattern out in a very unfortunate geometric form which will make the need for a strong southern boundary along the remainder of Hamptons Road to the east even more important. Both sites together however will work well with regard to forming a boundary and creating a strong southern gateway.



82. *Prebbleton has a discrete character and rural outlook, with significant numbers of rural residential development on the southern periphery of the town placing pressure on existing community and infrastructure services and potentially undermining the character of the Township identified in the Prebbleton Structure Plan (refer to RRS13 Appendix 1 – Prebbleton Urban Form & Growth Management & Strategic Infrastructure Locations Criteria)*

I cannot comment on this with regard to the services and infrastructure, such as water supply / sewer, waste management etc. My response relates solely to the urban aspects such as community services, commercial activities, recreational activities etc.

I would generally agree with the officer's statement if Prebbleton was further removed from Christchurch but due to its proximity it has access to extensive services in Christchurch and indeed most people living in Prebbleton do travel to Christchurch or Lincoln on a daily basis for work or secondary school. There is however a limit to the growth Prebbleton can support based on the available current services. In my urban analysis of Prebbleton I have therefore also included additional community and commercial facilities on Springs Road just south of the current commercial area.

In addition to that, the PSP identifies growth areas for recreational and commercial activities, which should be able to support the expected increase in urban and some increase in rural residential activities.

The peri-urban rural residential development does not necessarily increase the demand/ or numbers for rural lifestyle. Its main purpose is to consolidate the rural residential lifestyle choice to a reduced area in close proximity to the urban environment, shifting away from the 4ha model. It does this by providing smaller rural residential lots, which the majority of rural residential residents prefer. At the same time it improves access to the community functions and facilities for rural residents via better connectivity, shorter travel distances and generally better integration of the rural residential developments. This in itself does not increase the number of rural residential properties.

83. *Council's Asset Manager Transportation has identified a preference that rural residential development does not extend to the south of Hamptons and Trices Roads to avoid any reduction in the safety and*

*efficiency of these roads, which are of strategic importance under the Christchurch Rolleston Environs Transportation Study and will be upgraded to improve local road access onto Stage 2 of the Christchurch Southern Motorway. Anticipated local road upgrades include the formation of roundabouts at the Springs Road and Shands Road intersections of Hamptons Road (refer to RRS13 Appendix 1 – Rural Residential Form, Function & Character and Prebbleton Strategic Infrastructure Locations Criteria and Appendix 2 – Map 24)*

84. There are currently 6 rural residential access points and 2 additional rural access gates from Trices Road onto the Site. The Peri-urban Design strategy for the Site proposes to consolidate this into one single T intersection offset from Stonebridge Way to respond to the road hierarchy and importance of Trices / Hamptons Road.
85. *The southern portion of the land nominated by A & B George & E & B Jeffs (S51) is comprised of Class I versatile soils (LUC), the eastern portion of this same block is comprised of Class II versatile soils (LUC)(refer to RRS13 Appendix 1 – Prebbleton Environmental, Cultural & Heritage Values Locations Criteria).*

I cannot provide specific comments on agriculture and soil classifications, as that not my area of expertise. However, I do not believe that the nature and size of the underlying titles within the proposed Site would allow for financially sustainable farming activities, as the individual lot sizes are too small. It would therefore be better to enable peri-urban rural residential development and take the pressure off other larger areas with fertile soils. (take pressure off the 4ha)

86. *All of the nominated land to the south of Prebbleton would require geotechnical assessments to determine the appropriateness of development and to determine what level of foundation design is required (refer to RRS13 Appendix 2 – Map 20). The southern portion of the E & G Smith & Ors (S52) and A & B George & E & B Jeffs (S51) land is located within the identified 'Liquefaction zone buffer' and there was liquefaction observed in close proximity to the site (refer to RRS13 Appendix 1 – Prebbleton Natural Hazards Location Criteria)*

This has been taken into account by the proposed strategy by using this portion of the Site to create a strong landscaped buffer to the rural land to the south.

## **CONCLUSION**

I strongly recommend including this Site in the RRS to ensure it is developed as a comprehensive peri-urban rural residential development. This is the only development approach that will allow sufficient 'capacity' and robustness to set a significant amount of land aside to create the much needed southern boundary and close the gap that currently exists between Hamptons Road /Birchs Road and the gateway at Toswill/Trices Road along with the north-western edge this is the most vulnerable peri-urban land with the most development pressure and should be managed proactively if the PSP is to be implemented.

The indicative Master Plan and underlying strategy would go along way to achieve the urban and rural residential consolidation in and around Prebbleton.

**Nicole Lauenstein**

**11 April 2014**



