

Attachment E

Urban Design and Context

EVIDENCE IN THE MATTER OF PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE 34- SOUTHBRIDGE

Evidence of Gabi Wolfer, Urban Designer, Selwyn District Council

QUALIFICATIONS

1. My name is Gabi Wolfer. I work for the Selwyn District Council as an Urban Designer. Between 2005-2010 I was employed in a similar position by a private planning, surveying and engineering consultancy and have since been working for the Selwyn District Council. I hold a Masters Degree in Urban and Spatial Planning from the Technical University Kaiserslautern, Germany and a Certificate of Proficiency (Thesis) from Lincoln University. I am an Associate Member of the New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI) and a member of the Architektenkammer Rheinland-Pfalz (Architectural Institute Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany).

EVIDENCE SCOPE

2. My evidence is focussing on demonstrating that the proposed plan change requests are practical and appropriate within an Urban Design context. I will be focussing on responding to the following issues relating to: *Character and reverse sensitivity, connectivity and fencing*.

REPORT STRUCTURE

3. My report is structured as follows:
 - **Proposal**- brief overview, including background of what is proposed
 - **Context**- description of the site and its surrounds in context with the proposal
 - **Assessment**- urban design assessment of potential issues, including fencing, connectivity and reverse sensitivity
 - **Overall conclusion and recommendation** - within this section I provide a conclusion and recommendation to above issues.

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks to rezone Rural (Outer Plains) land to be rezoned to Living 1 at 134 High Street, Southbridge. Part of this rezoning includes the subdivision of 5.93ha of land into 56 residential sections with an average lot size of 650m² (see map below). The land is proposed to be rezoned to Living 1.

With the rezoning of the land and its intensification comes the challenge of allowing an environment to establish that is in keeping with the surrounds and the adjacent residential neighbourhood in particular. The location of the site on the outskirts of Southbridge requires integration on multiple levels; one being the development of a streetscape that will connect new development with the established community, the other will be addressing the interface with adjacent landuses. Part of this public streetscape will be the fencing that is going to be developed along the street frontage of High Street, the new loop road and Bellfield Street, which is a Council road currently used as a Council reserve.

The proposal of new development suggests that the current use of the site is not going to be retained and that the present environment is not going to remain in its current form. In fact, the currently agriculturally used site will be intensified for residential purposes. The proposed site is also adjacent to the edge of the Southbridge Township and is subject to an Outline Development Plan (ODP).

CONTEXT

Surrounds and Site



The approximately 6ha site is located to the south-west of Southbridge's urban area and bound by High, Brook and Belfield/Robinson Streets. One existing house and associated grounds are on site. Situated opposite and to the East is a residential area, zoned Living 1. This area can be characterised as a historically evolved residential neighbourhood. The dominant building types are smaller older-style single storey bungalows and some two-storey houses, which are accompanied by established grounds and plantings. Fencing along the road frontages within this

area varies from no fencing to low-level plantings, open-style yards and hedges that have grown to substantial height. North of the proposed site is a drilling and water wells business and one residential property. Both have established hedging along their boundary with the proposed site. Belfield Street to the West is maintained as a Council reserve with mature deciduous trees and is also used as a pedestrian connection between Brook and St. Johns Streets. Along Brook Street to the South the adjacent land is used for agricultural purposes and pastoral farming.

ASSESSMENT

Character

Being located at the edge of the Southbridge Township, the proposal is challenged by achieving a good integration with the rest of the township and the adjacent Living 1 residential area in particular. While having its own identity, the proposed layout needs to embrace the local character. Placed in an area that once was considered to be one of the largest wheat growing areas in New Zealand's 1820's, Southbridge gained significance and national recognition. Subsequently a railway

line was built, which provided vital transport provisions between Christchurch and Southbridge until the 1960's. Although little remains of this railway era, Southbridge retained its character as a rural service town with shops and community services and a defined town centre. In order to be in keeping with this character, fencing needs to be of an open style nature, with the ability to establish attractive front yards with appropriate plantings and landscaping. Houses need to be of a stand-alone typology on larger sized sections.

Reverse sensitivity

Sharing boundaries with non-residential landuses on three sides might cause potential reverse sensitivity issues that need to be considered. In particular, these are the Rural-residential interfaces on the West and Southern boundaries and the Residential- commercial interface on the northern boundary. The ODP shows that by proposing adequate section layouts and having deeper sections along the northern boundary, the separation distance between potentially conflicting landuses can be increased. Prescribed building setbacks also encourage landowners to place their dwelling well-set back from the northern boundary, which creates extra space to establish a landscaped buffer zone.

Awareness needs to be raised for new landowners that are adjacent to surrounding rural (farming) landuses, particularly on the southern boundary of the site. Sections adjoining rural land could be affected by farming activities that might cause noise, smell or dust. While the width of Brook Street provides some separation distance from these potential effects, buyers need to be made aware of potential effects.

Connectivity

In order to achieve a good integration of the subdivision, the proposed movement layout needs to be legible and direct for all modes of transport. Routes of interest are East-West between the proposed site, the established neighbourhood around Taiaroa Place to the East and the reserve to the West. The proposed ODP shows a pedestrian connection/walkway at the end of the middle cul-de sac. Another important connection is the provision of a direct route to the town centre and associated community facilities, which is provided via loop road and associated footpath. Overall, the site provides for a low speed environment for resident traffic only with the ability for cycling and walking.

Fencing

In order to be in keeping with the existing character of the site's surrounds, fencing needs to be of an open style nature with the ability to establish attractive front yards with appropriate plantings and landscaping.

The rural inspired township itself and the existing urban form in the immediate vicinity lend itself to adopt a type of fencing that has been applied to other Living Z zones of similar character within the Selwyn District. This style of fencing, when in public view/ within the public/private interface would be low, transparent and landscaped.

Internal fencing between neighbours should be allowed up to 2m in height, if setback 3m or more from the front boundary.

Having low-level fences along the front boundary would have several benefits; one being that the road corridor gets visually widened, which relates well with the more rural surrounds. Other benefits include the creation of an attractive street scene that is not characterised by high closed board fencing that encourage tagging and are unpleasant places to be. Furthermore with the open views between the building and the footpath/road informal passive surveillance is encouraged which will help to make the



Existing fencing and landscaping along High Street

area safer and ultimately more enjoyable.



Sections along High Street are shown on the proposed ODP to be setback from the road boundary. No fencing or a low level type of fencing along High Street will enhance the streetscape and contribute to the rural inspired character of the township. This principal should also apply to any allotment that is adjacent to the proposed loop road connecting High Street with Brook Street, as well as properties within any future secondary roads established in the ODP area.

Existing fencing and landscaping along High Street

As part of Plan Change 7 Council has explored the benefits of providing some control over fencing in Living Zones, where fences adjoin public spaces as in roads, accessways or Council owned reserves. Rules 4.13 and 4.17 of the DP are operative rules that apply to specific Living areas. Internal fencing and fencing of the 'back yard' is considered to be within the private realm of a site and hence not part of these fencing rules.

Fences are more than just physical barriers marking your private property. In whatever shape, form, style or construction, fences play an important role and can:

- Provide security and privacy
- Add to attractive neighbourhood street scenes
- Support creating safe spaces for children
- Assist in keeping pets safe
- Reduce the impact from traffic noise
- Provide wind shelter
- Compliment the built form of house & garage

The style one uses for their fencing largely depends on its location and the intended purpose. By choosing a fence style that complies with the CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) guidelines and the District Plan rules, one can contribute to a safer, more attractive neighbourhood.

Contrary to common belief, a higher fence doesn't make your property safer. High close-board fences tempt taggers, help burglars to hide their activities from passing foot traffic or neighbours and can cause traffic issues, if positioned on corners. Informal passive surveillance achieved by open views between the street or the reserve and your house promotes safer environments that are ultimately more enjoyable to explore.

Selwyn Council wants to encourage fencing options along the street and reserves that are practical are attractive and help to reduce crime by increasing surveillance between public and private spaces.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

With the proposed rezoning to Living 1, the fencing rules to manage fencing within the public/private interface would not apply; unless included in some other form, for example as part of the ODP. Reviewing how the District Plan distinguishes between Living 1 and Living Z zones, it becomes apparent that a rezoning to Living Z instead of Living 1 is appropriate. The District Plan describes the different zones as follows:

Living Z areas are:

- “urban growth areas,
- within or adjacent to the edge of existing townships,
- subject to an ODP to ensure good standards of Urban Design...”,

whereas Living 1 are “areas that are managed to maintain environments that are most pleasant to reside in.”

In conclusion the characteristics of a Living Z zone are more applicable to the proposed site of PC34 than those of a Living 1 zone; hence the fencing rules associated with Living Z areas should apply too.

The land should be rezoned as Living Z with a special note on the ODP that a minimum average section size of no smaller than 650m² is required. Alternatively there could be a note on the ODP showing where the following rules would apply.

In particular:

- Rule 4.13 of the Selwyn District Plan, which addresses fencing between the building façade and the street frontage, applies to sections along High Street and within the ODP, except for
- The sections along the Council reserve (Road) where Rule 4.17 of the Selwyn District Plan, which addresses fencing along public reserves should applies.

DIAGRAMM 1



Diagram 1: Fencing recommendations, 134 High Street, Southbridge