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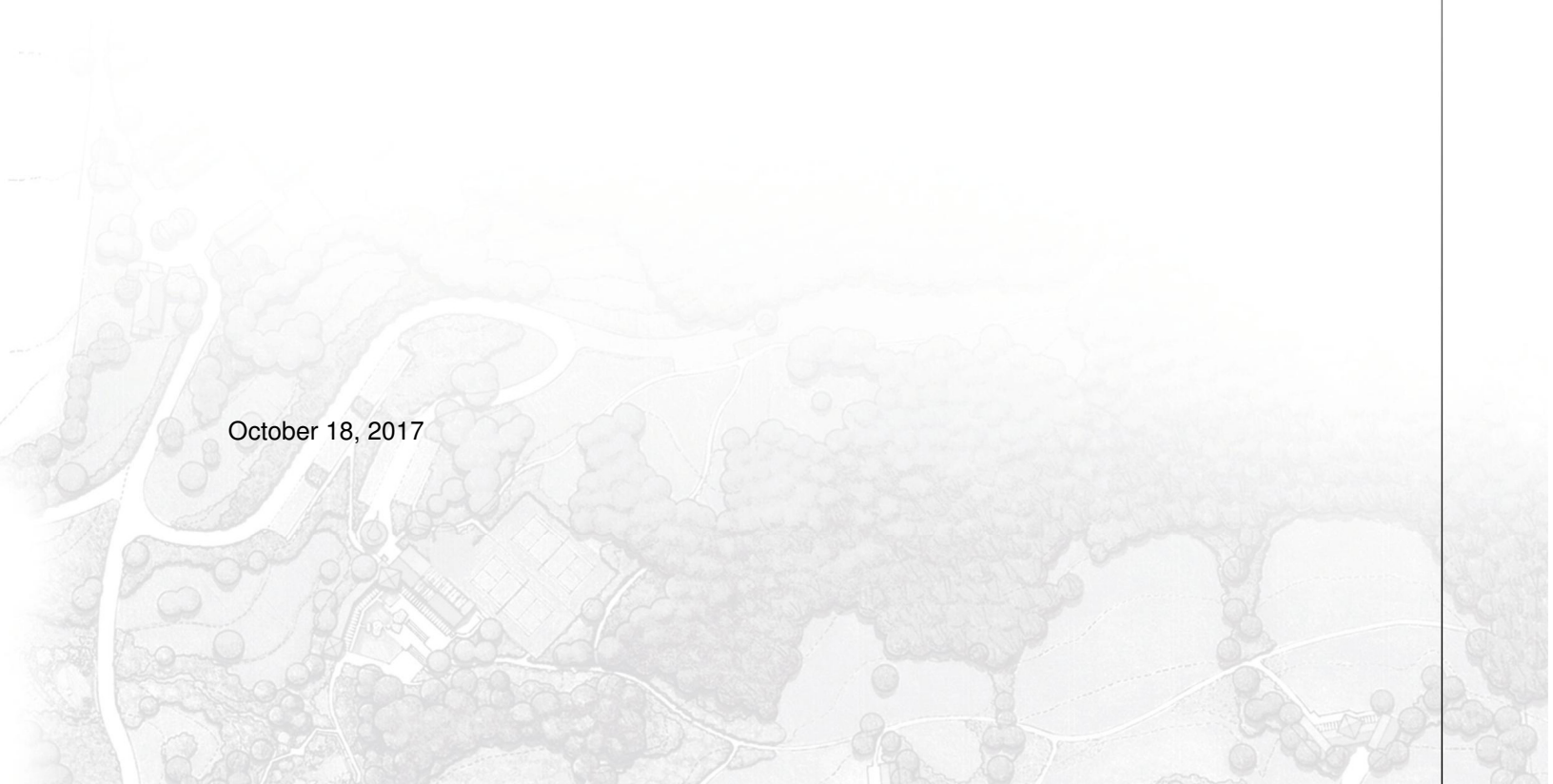
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Prepared for

BALLYMENA HOLDINGS LTD.

Pocock Road/Annvale Road, Springfield

October 18, 2017



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INTRODUCTION

Ballymena Holdings Ltd request a Private Plan Change in relation to an area of land to the northwest of the township of Springfield (the 'site'). The Ballymena Block and site is shown mapped on **figure 1**. I have been engaged to assess and report on the effects of the proposed Plan Change with regards to landscape and amenity.

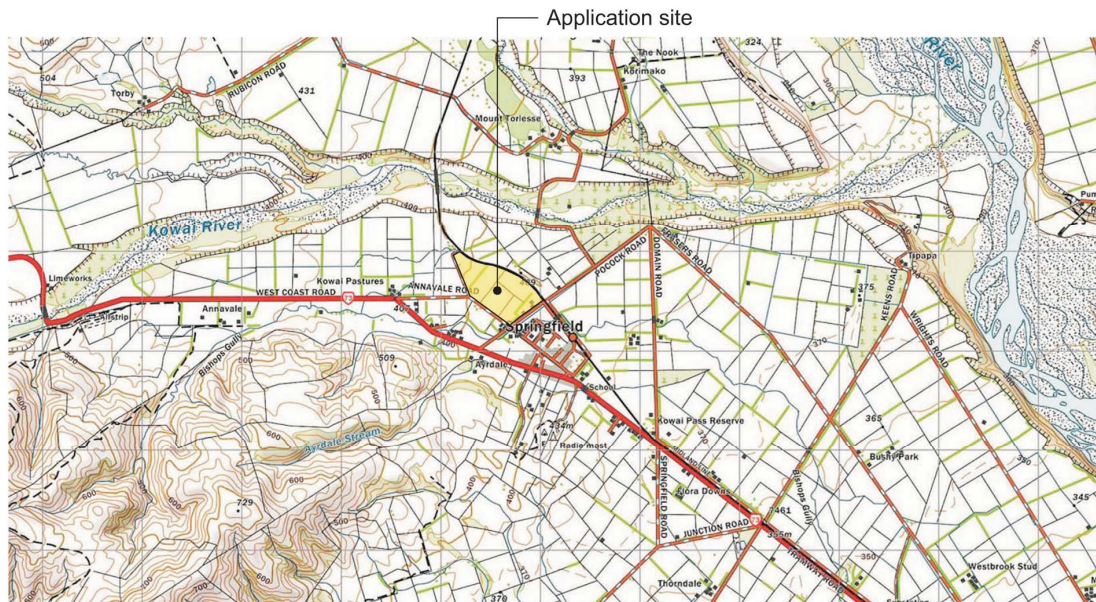
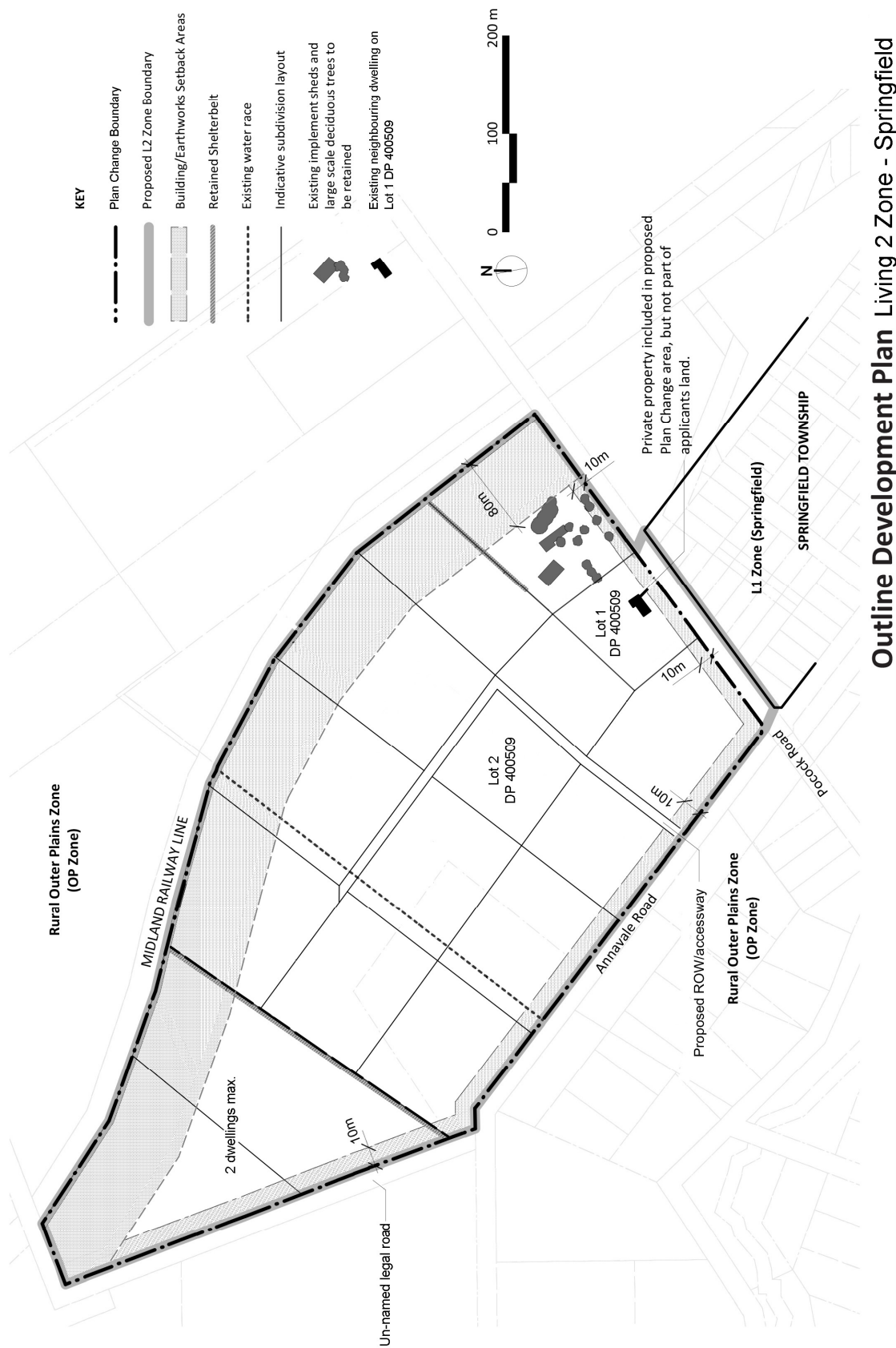


Figure 1: Application site location

The details of the proposed Plan Change are set out in the Private Plan Change Request document that has been prepared by John Cook, Planner. In summary, the proposed Plan Change seeks the rezoning of the site from Rural (Outer Plains) Zone to Living 2 (a low density residential zoning). The proposal incorporates a requirement for all development of the site to be in accordance with an Outline Development Plan (ODP) that is included as part of the Plan Change application.

The intention of the proposed zoning is to provide for low density residential development. The result of the ODP and the various planning mechanisms that are incorporated into the proposed Plan Change is that a specific type and configuration of low density residential development will be provided for.

I understand that a pre-application meeting was held between Mr Cook (Planner for the applicant) and the Selwyn District Council, where a preliminary concept plan was discussed. This preliminary concept plan which included an indicative lot layout, approximate lot sizes and basic circulation patterns has been progressed to an ODP (outline development plan) (**figure 2**). The ODP is discussed in this report and forms the basis of my landscape and visual effects assessment.



Outline Development Plan Living 2 Zone - Springfield

P1 Drawn: JH
Scale 1:5000 @ A4

Figure 2: Outline Development Plan

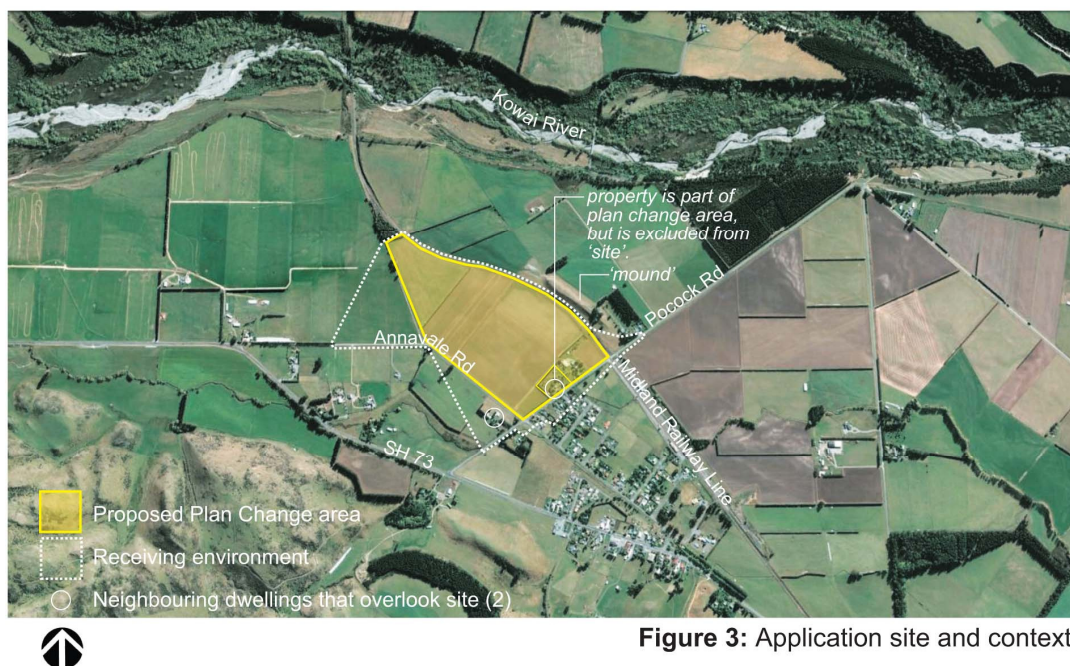
LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

Application Site

At the macro scale, the site is located in the Upper Plains Land Type which in itself is part of a much wider landtype grouping, known as a “Low Altitude Plains Landscape”¹. This land type “...comprises the broad low angle coalescing outwash fans and associated high terraces of the major rivers (Rakaia and Waimakariri Rivers)”. The site is towards the western edge of this land type. The substrates here are deep gravels topped with shallow droughty loessial-based soils of varying depth.

The northern boundary of the site is defined by a section of the Midland Line rail corridor. The southeast boundary is formed by Pocock Road. The southwestern and western boundaries are marked by Annavale and an unnamed road respectively. I understand from the traffic assessment prepared by Mr Chesterman from Novogroup that both of these metaled roads carry low traffic numbers.

The vase-shaped site covers just over 31 hectares and adjoins the existing urban boundary at Springfield. Part of the land opposite the site on Pocock Road is zoned L1 and forms the northwestern extent of the Springfield settlement. See **figure 3**.



The site is largely visually open from all sides and is currently being used for the production of feed crops and silage. The site appears flat, but undulates subtly towards the northwest extremity where the land dips down and towards the Kowai River (**figure 4**). There is a water race that runs perpendicular to Annavale Road crossing the property where it more or less terminates at the rail corridor. A collection of rural barns and smaller outbuildings are located in a separately fenced off yard area in the eastern side of the site ('the yards' - **figure 5**). This area is largely physically and visually separated from the greater part of the site by a coniferous shelterbelt. A number of tall deciduous trees are well established within the yard area, several of which would be integrated with the development of the site. In addition to the

¹ Canterbury Regional Landscape Study 1993 and Review *Final Report* July 2010

yards area, a second coniferous shelterbelt further to the northwest subdivides the majority of the site into essentially two large paddocks.



Figure 4: Looking across the site from the corner of Pocock and Annavale Roads.



Figure 5: Looking towards the 'yards' part of the site near where Pocock Road crosses the Midland Railway Line.

Because of the flat and largely open topography, views to the Torlesse Range in particular are largely unobstructed. The two shelterbelts, groupings of trees and sporadic buildings do little to distract from these close mountain vistas which are dramatic (**figure 6**).

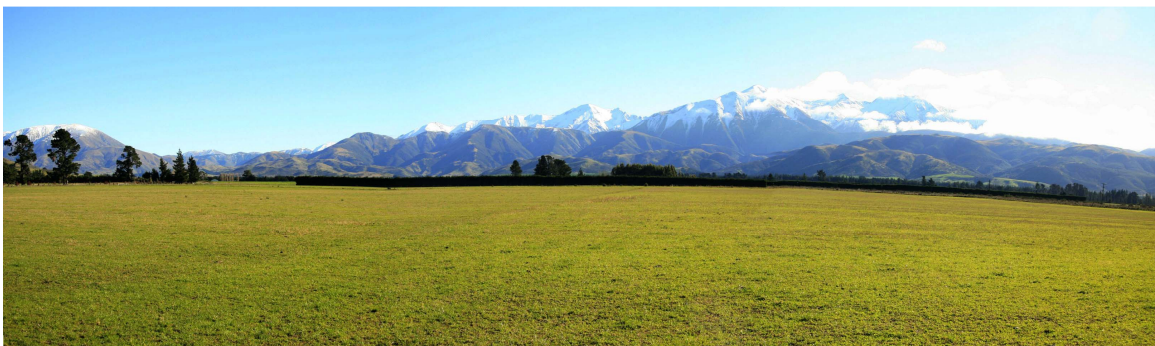


Figure 6: Looking northwestwards across the site near towards the Torlesse Range.

In general, the shelterbelts in the vicinity are typically well-clipped evergreen coniferous belts or deciduous broadleaf species including *Eucalyptus*. There are also sporadic clumps of informally grouped trees and small woodlots - usually near settled enclaves to provide shelter and more intimate living environments in an otherwise expansive landscape.

There is a single private residence included within the proposed plan change area, but outside the ODP. This property is not owned by the applicant. I further understand that this neighbour supports the plan change. This neighbouring dwelling is located within a high amenity sheltered and large garden setting, which visually screens it from much of the site. The location of this property can be seen on **figure 3**.

The site boundaries are generally fenced with post and wire stock fences. Post and rail fencing is also in place around the yards area. The majority of the southern boundary of the site includes dense, evergreen coniferous shelterbelts up to 6m tall. There is also a coniferous shelterbelt along the short northern boundary.

The Receiving Environment

The receiving environment can be defined as the area surrounding the application site that could be potentially affected by the proposed changes to the site in a more than minor way. The receiving environment is shown mapped in **figure 3**. The site and the proposed changes to it may be visible beyond this area, however, the difference is - any effects beyond the receiving environment would not be significantly adverse.

A predominantly open and flat 'wedge' of rural landscape (which includes the site) characterises the general setting, enclosed by the Kowai River, the toe of the Russell Range and further afield, by the Torlesse Range. The farmed blocks in the contextual area appear moderately large, geometric in form with their boundaries and fencelines often demarcated with shelterbelts to protect topsoil and stock from the strong northwesterlies. The only exception to the rigid geometry is where the sinuous curvature of the Midland Line disrupts the pattern. The braided Kowhai, Little Kowhai and Rubicon Rivers, all tributaries to the nearby Waimakariri River also disrupt the cultural patterning, as they downcut through this typical 'Canterbury patchwork quilt' rural landscape.

The surrounding rural landscape zoned Rural Outer Plains ('OP') is presently utilized in a number of ways including but not limited to: dairying, cropping, sheep and cattle grazing, and for residential purposes. The township of Springfield, zoned L1, is reasonably compact, with its edges transitioning abruptly to traditional rural farming activities and subsequent broad-scale land patterns, including that of the site.

Opposite the south eastern corner of the site, and over Pocock Road are half a dozen or so occupied dwellings of modest character, which are within the Springfield settlement. These properties are on smaller domestic-scaled sections and include gardened surrounds. There is another dwelling with various sheds and outbuildings located on a larger lot to the west of the junction of Pocock and Annavale Roads, and southwest of the site, within the Outer Plains Zone.

To the northeast of the site is a long, narrow, flat topped hill of indeterminate origin². This landform is located to the northwest of the Midland Line (**figure 7**).



Figure 7: Mound landform to the northeast of the site.

The public road environment is typically rural - even where zoning is residential, characterised by broad mown grass verges at various states of upkeep, minimal kerb and channeling, hedge and shelterbelt planting (deciduous and evergreen), overhead powerlines, road signs and post and wire and low timber fences.

² From discussions with a Landcare geomorphologist, I understand that the landform is either artificial, created in conjunction with the railyards, or is part of a remnant surface, like a 'mini Racecourse Hill'.

Overall, the character of the majority of the local area, including the site, is that of a traditional working rural landscape. However, the proximity of Springfield settlement, characterised by its collection of modest dwellings arranged in a compact grid layout introduces a contrasting and domesticated urban character. The site thus finds itself located on the cusp of a settlement (Springfield) and a traditional rural plains landscape.

Landscape Values

I have not undertaken a specific study of community-held values pertaining to the site and area in general. However, several statutory documents do provide some indication of the perceived value, which I will discuss below:

Canterbury Regional Landscape Study:

This document states that with regards to landscape values; *“To many New Zealanders the Plains landscape is the very essence of Canterbury. The contrast between the unmodified ‘natural’ hills and the manicured patchwork quilt of the plains has been recognised as distinctive through literature, art and visitor data”... To geomorphologists, the Canterbury Plains are classic outwash plains... To tangata whenua, the plains contain the great taonga, the rivers and wetlands”*³.

The study goes on to say under ‘Degree of Naturalness’;

*“Because of the lack of landform variety, it is the landcover and land use patterns that dominate the character of the Plains. The landscape is perceived as un-natural apart from its soils, the limited remnant natural features such as wetlands, forest, shrubland, and grassland pockets, and the braided rivers. The latter are the most important natural feature. Viewed from higher ground or from the air the Plains are certainly expressive of their formation but at a scale not readily experienced at ground level. An elevated vantage point is best from which to experience the subtlety of the natural soil and drainage patterns that occur across much of the landscape. The developed Plains are very important to the region’s landscape image, however their lack of naturalness suggests that they do not meet the criteria of S6(b)”*⁴.

The ‘Upper Plains’ land type sits within a larger landscape category ‘Low Altitude Plains Landscapes’. Typically this comprises *‘shallow droughty soils and variable loess cover’*⁵...

I understand that the 1993 Canterbury Regional Landscape Study has undergone a review (2010) and that the findings for this area are not significantly different from the original study.

PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE

I am familiar with the information and plans that make up the proposed Plan Change request. In this assessment I will not review all of the various plan provisions and mechanisms that are proposed to direct the changes to the landscape. Others will cover this. This assessment will focus on the changes to the landscape set out by the Outline Development Plan (ODP) – **figure 2**. It is my understanding that any development not in accordance with the ODP would be at minimum a discretionary activity requiring resource consent.

³ Canterbury Regional Landscape Study, Volume 1, prepared for the Canterbury Regional Council, Boffa Miskell and Lucas Associates, October 1993, page 39.

⁴ Canterbury Regional Landscape Study, Volume 1, prepared for the Canterbury Regional Council, Boffa Miskell and Lucas Associates, October 1993, page 40.

⁵ Ibid, page 39.

Permitted baseline

Under the current Selwyn District Plan the permitted baseline allows for subdivision for the purposes of activities in the Rural Zone (Outer Plains Zone) down to a 20 hectare minimum lot density. In the absence of this proposed private Plan Change request, this would potentially allow for two separate titles within the 30 hectare site, one being a complying lot and the other one would be an 'undersize' lot which would require Resource Consent before a dwelling could be erected.

Outline Development Plan

The landscape change that would occur following implementation of the ODP would change the environment from two large open rural paddocks and a third smaller paddock ('the yards', containing various outbuildings and trees) to a low-density residential land use. I understand that the various sheds and outbuildings and some of the more notable trees in the yards area are intended to be incorporated with the development. Fifteen lots are anticipated to be created from Lot 2 DP 400509 which would range in size from just over 1 hectare to just over 3.5 hectares. The two largest lots would occupy the 'northwest paddock' while the relatively smaller lots would be located closer to the Springfield township. In addition, provision would be made for a Right of Way/accessway that would serve a maximum of eight of the lots. The remaining lots would be accessed directly from the surrounding public road network, Annvale and Pocock Roads. The existing Lot 1 DP 400509, being the other allotment subject to this plan change, is already 1 ha and accordingly will not be able to be further subdivided.

I understand that it is the intention that all of the shelterbelts currently located on site will be retained for pragmatic reasons (providing wind shelter). These shelterbelts and various trees currently located in the yards area would be more than likely retained as they serve practical shelter purposes and contribute to the overall amenity which would doubtless benefit future marketing of the allotments. It is also acknowledged that the various future owners would develop each lot and likely put their own shelterbelts and various planting in place to provide shelter from the strong winds. To that end vegetation patterns overall would gradually increase over time.

The existing water race crossing the site will be retained and will be subject to the standard Council rules such as regarding building setbacks from water bodies.

In addition to the layout and overall character described above, the detail of the proposed Plan Change request would include a suite of provisions that will control the way in which the overall site and individual lots can be developed in order to maintain a low-density residential character and which include such aspects as:

- Built site coverage.
- Building height.
- Building setbacks from boundaries.
- The type, height and extent of any permitted boundary fencing.
- Building densities.

The general layout of the proposed new L2 Zone can be seen on the attached ODP. It is the changes to the site and changes to the site's context arising from this that I have assessed with regards to any effects on landscape character and rural amenity.

RELEVANT STATUTORY DOCUMENTS

I consider the statutory documents listed below relevant to any effects on landscape and rural amenity arising from the proposed Plan Change:

- The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA),
- The Natural Resources Regional Plan (NRRP)
- The Selwyn District Plan,

In addition, the Selwyn District Council Rural Residential Background Report (a non-statutory document) gives some guidance regarding criteria for selection of preferred rural residential areas in the District.

The following section will summarise the guidance that the above documents provide in an assessment of the landscape effects of the proposed Plan Change. Following my assessment of the effects of the proposed Plan Change in the subsequent section, I will test the consistency of the proposed Plan Change with these documents in the conclusion.

The Resource Management Act 1991

Part II (Purpose and Principles) of the Act sets out matters to be taken into consideration when carrying out assessments of the effects of development on landscape and amenity. This is found under all parts of Section 5 (Purpose) and Section 7 (Other Matters – specifically b,c,f, and g).

- (1) The purpose of this Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.
- (2) In this Act, **sustainable management** means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being and for their health and safety while—
 - (a) sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and
 - (b) safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and
 - (c) avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

The proposed rezoning will not hamper any reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations in the context of the natural and physical resources of the subject land. The development of the site would represent a minor reduction in productive land in the context of the Canterbury Plains within Selwyn District. The significant increase in large-scale vegetation cover (trees), following development of individual allotments will benefit soil and water resources, by providing further shelter from prevailing winds, particularly the north-westerly and by reducing the need for irrigation.

Under Section 7(c) of the Act; the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values is provided for. The RMA interprets amenity to mean; ... *“those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence and cultural and recreational attributes”*.

Under Section 7(f) of the Act; the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment is provided for.

Regarding 'aesthetic coherence', 'aesthetics' are concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty while 'coherence' is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as 'the quality of forming a unified whole'.

The overall site is currently largely open. Following development of the fifteen individual allotments this will change, over time, to a more intimate character contributed by the additional dwellings, shelter and garden plantings. The proposed rezoning will see a reduction in rural outlook and open space than what is currently the case. In my opinion, a low-density pattern of residential development here will contribute a different type of amenity, largely through a substantial increase in vegetation type and pattern, but also through additional built forms. Levels of amenity will be largely reliant on the various individuals' landscape treatment of their site frontages. There is already precedent for the type and level of amenity anticipated in this type of low density residential development, which can be seen in other areas, not necessarily limited to the Selwyn District, that have recently undergone rezoning from rural to residential land use. There is no reason to expect that these patterns of development would not continue on the proposed site with the provisions set out in the ODP and various rules.

Thus it is expected that high levels of amenity and environmental quality will be achieved following the implementation of the proposed ODP. And so Section (c) and Section (f) matters in the RMA will be achieved.

The Selwyn District Plan⁶

Part B1.4 of Volume 2 (Rural) of the Plan mentions landscapes and its values held by the community. The Plan identifies outstanding natural landscapes in the following way:

"A 'shared values' approach was adopted. The Council consulted with residents, landowners, occupiers, tāngata whenua and interest groups about any areas or natural features which they considered to be outstanding in each geomorphic area. The participants then identified activities which they thought had effects which were appropriate and inappropriate within these outstanding areas or natural features. The discussions were facilitated by a professional landscape architect, and form the basis of the policies and rules in this plan. Throughout this process the Canterbury Plains were identified as special, but did not meet the rigorous test that section 6(b) requires when determining landscapes are 'outstanding'".⁷

The subject site does not fall within any identified outstanding natural landscapes or contain any features identified on the planning maps.

The proposed Plan Change removes a section of the Rural (OP) Zone and replaces it with a low-density residential zone (L2) increasing the Districts' capacity for provision of rural residential living. The proposed Plan Change intends to provide a high amenity rural residential living environment. The new area of zoning will enable development consistent with the included ODP.

⁶ The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement is not separately addressed as any relevant objectives and policies are considered to be incorporated into the Selwyn District Plan.

⁷ 12A.6 Anticipated Environmental Results 19 May 2010, Part B1.4, page B1-034.

Landscape and amenity matters are addressed in the Plan in both the Rural and Township volumes and contain a number of objectives and policies that any new development must meet.

In the SDP, Rural Volume / Part B – ‘*Growth of Rural Area*’ the issues identified are largely concerned with how the demand for varied living opportunities might be met in the rural zone, how the potentially adverse effects of development can affect natural and physical resources, and rural character, the problems created through reverse sensitivity and the dilemma of how residential density can be managed solely through subdivision methods.

Because the site context includes an existing living zone on the east side of Pocock Road, and that the proposed development will provide a low-density residential zone the objectives and policies relating to amenity need to be largely addressed under the Township volume. In this volume an additional issue identified is concerned with the effect of any activity that makes townships ‘*less pleasant places to live or work in*’. Reverse sensitivity is also an issue identified in the Plan for the more built up areas being in close proximity to rural based activities.

It is important that the re-zoning of the site from rural to low-density residential does not offend the policies and objectives outlined above. With regards to landscape matters, I consider the specific policies and objectives are: Objectives B4.3.1, B4.3.2, B4.3.7 and Policies B4.3.87, B4.3.88. (Townships Volume that deal specifically to the urban growth of Springfield).

The Plan anticipates that by implementing the objectives and policies from Section B4.3 the quality of the environment following this Plan Change should result in

- a) *‘Variation in activities in the rural area on the Plains.*
- b) *Buildings are low rise (1 or 2 story) and surrounded by vegetation cover rather than hard standing.*
- c) *Utilities are made of low reflective materials.*
- d) *Nuisance effects may occur from time to time from temporary or seasonal activities, but these effects should be mild and typical of the rural environment.*
- e) *Buffer zones are maintained between residential activities and activities with which they may be incompatible’⁸.*

With regards to preferred growth of Springfield, the Plan includes three specific policies and three general policies.

Firstly, Policy B4.3.87 is concerned with infilling the existing Living Zone, where possible. This is not relevant to the site as it is outside the existing L1 Zone and the proposed form of low density residential cannot be easily accommodated within this zone.

Secondly, Policy B4.3.88 states that any new Living Zone avoids being sited south of SH73, north of the Midland Railway Line and east of the existing Living 1 Zone. The reasons for this Policy are to confine the township between these two major transport routes and to provide a generous degree of separation between built development and the Russell Range which is identified in the Plan as having ‘special landscape values’. The site is located in accordance with this policy.

And thirdly, policy B4.3.89 discusses potential reverse sensitivity issues were a wedge of land, currently zoned OP between the L1 Zone and the railway line rezoned for residential purposes, presumably L1 density. While this area of land is beyond the site, a similar principle may apply with the site seeking rezoning from OP to a low-density residential

⁸ Selwyn District Plan - Rural Volume | PART B - People's Health, Safety and Values, page B3-047.

landuse, where dwellings would be introduced relatively close to the rail corridor. In the ODP, a substantial 80m building setback from the rail corridor is proposed which will go a considerable way towards reducing any reverse sensitivity effects that could potentially occur.

In addition to the above, three general policies are flagged that may also be relevant to Springfield. Of these three, only one is relevant to landscape matters (Policy B1.4.13: Malvern Hills & Russell Range) which is concerned with ONLs and ONFs and landscape values generally – and with regards to the Russell Range in particular. As previously mentioned, the site is well separated from the Russell Range physically and therefore has no effects on the landscape values of the range.

The Selwyn District Council Rural Residential Background Report (RRBR)

The Selwyn District Council has prepared a report to ‘...inform (the) Proposed Plan Change 17 to incorporate rural residential provisions into the Selwyn District Plan to sustainably manage development on the periphery of townships within the UDS Area of the District’⁹. The report was adopted by Council on the 22nd February 2011.

This report identifies ways that limited amounts of rural residential development could be accommodated in the eastern part of the District and lists several factors that have prompted this study. The report also ‘...prescribes the criteria to ensure that rural residential households are: (a) Located and distributed in the most appropriate areas throughout the eastern portion of the District; (b) Able to achieve the anticipated levels of rural residential character; and (c) Consistent with the identified number, the staging of development and the principles guiding rural residential activities detailed in Proposed Change 1 to the Regional Policy Statement (Chapter 12A)’¹⁰. The subject land site is beyond the UDS area. However, many of the principles contained within the RRBR can be used as a useful guide to help inform this application.

The report finds that lot sizes in the range of 0.3ha to 2ha as being ‘...able to best demonstrate the form, function and character anticipated for rural residential activities. Rural residential activities in the context of this report are defined as being: “Residential units outside the Regional Policy Statement Urban Limits at an average density of between one and two households per hectare”. The application is largely consistent with this with the potential allotment areas being at the upper of the range noted above.

This report is divided up into 6 sections. Section 1 outlines the background as to why the study was necessary in the first place, the processes involved and how the outcomes will inform PC17. Section 2 sets down the policy context of PC17. Section 3 describes the existing rural resource and why rural residential development is required in the District and the inherent issues and opportunities associated with this type of development. Section 4 discusses the principles at play that will guide PC17 and the criteria developed for selecting ‘preferred locations’ for rural residential development. Section 5 assesses each township to test how rural residential development may be accommodated (Springfield is not included) and Section 6 outlines the criteria for the selection of preferred locations for rural residential development based on the principles and assessments from sections 4 and 5.

Section 6 effectively summarises much of the previous material in the report and lists several criteria that SDC consider important when selecting preferred locations for rural residential development. These criteria are found in Table 8. While Springfield is not considered a ‘preferred location’ for rural residential development, a number of the elements listed apply to rural residential activities in general.

⁹ Selwyn District Council Rural Residential Background Report, February 2011, Cover.

¹⁰ Ibid, page 3.

Also relevant from the report with regards to the site for maintaining and enhancing landscape value and rural amenity in a general sense can be found in Section 3; Overview of PC17 under 'Rural land resource' (paragraph 3.5), under 'Intensification, diversification and loss of rural productivity' (paragraphs 3.20, 3.25); under 'Rural residential development and its context within the Canterbury Plains' (all paragraphs); Section 4; Guiding Principles under 'Landscape Values' (paragraphs 4.5), and 'Rural Residential Character' (paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7).

In paragraph 3.81, the 'Peri-urban' form of development is anticipated to accommodate the majority of households to rural residential activity. This proposal is consistent in spirit with 'peri-urban development', that is, development adjoining an existing township in the District (Springfield in this case).

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE AND AMENITY

The primary change to the landscape following the proposed rezoning will be a transition from two large open paddocks, plus a third smaller area containing various outbuildings and some associated amenity/shelter planting (the yards) to a pattern of built development consistent with that indicated on the ODP. These changes will affect the way the area is perceived and will alter the current levels of rural amenity and landscape character. There will be effects on observers from outside the site, such as neighbours, travelers passing by on Pocock and Annvale Roads, and to a minor extent SH73, local residents who pass through the contextual area in day-to-day activities, people traveling by rail and by the users of the site itself.

To reiterate, low density residential development typically exhibits high levels of amenity. This is expected to also be the case following development of the ODP. A sense of openness and abundant greenery will prevail over built forms. To this end the proposal limits landscape screening on site boundaries to retaining what currently exists (for pragmatic reasons).

When considering and articulating how the proposed plan change will affect landscape character and rural amenity, I have separated out any potentially affected parties under three groups including:

- Users of public Roads including SH73;
- Users of the rail corridor, and;
- Neighbouring Residents.

Users of public roads

The majority of the site is largely visually obscured from Pocock Road due to existing coniferous shelterbelts located on site. However, there are angling views possible through a developed rural block to the southwest of the site, and across the rail corridor to the northeast of the site. The proposal would introduce several dwellings into these two viewshafts, however overall levels of rural amenity would be largely unchanged due to the buffering of these views through existing buildings and trees, particularly in the yards area, where several trees and some of the outbuildings will be likely retained as part of the proposal. Furthermore, to the south of Pocock Road there is an existing collection of houses which forms the north west edge of the L1 Zone which already impacts on the rural amenity from Pocock Road in the vicinity of the site.

Views from Annvale Road are much more open, where clear vistas to the Torlesse Range beyond can be enjoyed in clear weather conditions. From this road the vista would change considerably from one of predominantly open rural land to a mosaic of built development and

vegetated patterning. Over time, views to the north across to the Torlesse Range would be potentially precluded by individuals' boundary plantings. However the number of affected road users would be low. While Annavale Road is connected to SH73, I understand from Mr Chesterman that this road is lightly used, largely providing an access to three households that have their driveways connecting to Annavale Road, and for general rural operations.

The largest number of public road users would be travelling on SH73, and therefore views of the proposal from this highway need to be carefully considered. From my observations, there is only one fleeting glimpse of the site (largely when eastbound) where there is a gap in the roadside planting and general development within. It is noted that this view is in the context of other built development and settled patterns generally which are located closer to the viewer in the fore and middle ground. Therefore any noticeable background changes to the site and any potential reduction in rural amenity experienced from SH73 would likely be negligible.

Users of the rail corridor

Views from the rail corridor have not been specifically assessed. However, the rail corridor is slightly elevated relative to the site, and so it would be expected that there would be clear views into and across the site from here. In the short term, rail users (travelling between Christchurch and the West Coast) would look across the site which would include up to fifteen dwellings and their curtilage areas, outbuildings and establishing shelter and garden plantings.

In the medium to longer term, approximately 1km of open rural views from the rail corridor on one side would doubtless gradually reduce following the anticipated development of gardens and shelter planting within private properties. It is noted that there are currently several stretches of the rail corridor near the site that have long distance rural views more or less fully screened now through various planting including shelterbelts, plantation forestry and woodlots located close to the rail corridor. Therefore the effects of up to an additional 1km loss of rural vista over what currently exists would not be unduly noticeable, nor unexpected in the local rural context. Furthermore, notwithstanding views to the Russell Range, the 'high echelon' rural views from the rail corridor are away from the site towards the Torlesse Range to the north.

Neighbouring Residents

As previously discussed, there are few neighbours, or more specifically, occupied dwellings who directly overlook the site. There are two and these neighbours are identified on **figure 3**. The other neighbours located nearby are effectively screened from the site by their own boundary planting and fencing. The neighbour closest to the site (being Lot 1 DP 400509 and forms part of the proposed plan change area), has views only to the yards area or northeastern corner of the site. The proposal would allow one dwelling to be located within this vista. As part of the proposal, several large trees would likely be retained as they would provide a 'ready-made' high amenity setting to any future dwelling located here. These trees would potentially provide a degree of buffering to any new dwelling on this site, and would reduce any potentially adverse visual effects of increased built development. The majority of the site to the north is screened from view by a 5m tall evergreen coniferous shelterbelt located on the site boundary. Notwithstanding this, I understand that this closest neighbour is in support of the proposal.

The second neighbour is located on Annavale Road and has northward views across the site. From my site observations, there is a row of mixed trees and native shrubs recently planted along this road boundary inside this neighbours property. These trees include oaks and so, over time as this planting establishes and matures - a significant buffer will form to

views across the site. However, there will be views *through* this planting to the site and beyond – the planting would not ultimately comprise a dense hedge. From this neighbour the vista will change from one of open verdant pasture with the Torlesse Range rising above it to that of a series of dwellings and over time establishing private plantings on individual allotments. It is likely that mountain views would still be possible following full development of the site.

The other nearby neighbours occupy several modest dwellings fronting Pocock Road opposite the southwestern corner of the site. Views from these neighbours towards the site are largely obscured by a coniferous shelterbelt that extends almost to the corner of Pocock and Annavale Roads. For these neighbours the vista would not significantly alter. The shelterbelt is likely to be retained as part of the proposal. It is anticipated that a single dwelling would be potentially visible where the top 2m of the roof structure would be seen above the 5m tall shelterbelt. In addition there would be an increase in vehicles negotiating the intersection of Annavale and Pocock Roads. However, any visible effects of additional vehicles from up to fifteen extra allotments in the area would be largely transient ones. There are currently no dwellings located on Pocock Road opposite the site's northeastern corner (the "yards site").

Summary

To summarise, few neighbours would appreciate any significant visual change to the site from within their properties. Of course 'landscape effects' or effects on 'landscape character' beyond purely visual landscape effects need to be considered too. It is likely that any residents currently located on the fringes of Springfield are aware that they are living on the edge of an open rural working landscape, even though they cannot necessarily see it. However, in my opinion, the scale of the proposal is limited to fifteen allotments which are relatively low given the lived-in nature of the adjacent Springfield residential zone to the southeast. The significant existing shelterbelt planting along the majority of the sites southern boundary precludes an open rural outlook for the majority of the sites neighbouring residents in any case. It would be unlikely that these residents would travel down Annavale Road to access the State Highway – it is less direct and has a metaled surface, therefore these residents' awareness of any changes to the site would be likely restricted to angling northward views along parts of Pocock Road only.

AVOIDANCE, REMEDIATION AND MITIGATION OF ADVERSE EFFECTS

Avoidance

As discussed above, any potential adverse effects will be minor. However, it is proposed that any building be setback 10m minimum¹¹ from Pocock and Annavale Roads which will ensure that the intervening area within the setback will be dominated by open space and vegetation rather than built forms. In the Townships Volume for the various Living 2 Zones, the typical road boundary setback is only 4 metres, increased to 5.5 metres for street facing garage doors. The dwelling setback from the site boundary with the Midland Railway is proposed to be 80m. This will ensure that any adverse effects of rail activities will be minimised.

The part of the site, northwest of the existing central shelterbelt that bisects the site will be restricted to a maximum of two allotments of no less than 2.9 hectares. These allotments will thus be the largest of the fifteen proposed. The purpose of positioning these two allotments here is to reduce any potential effect of 'intensifying' the rural landscape in this part of the site that is furthest from Springfield. Conversely, the smaller allotments of the remaining

¹¹ Which is consistent with Rule 3.13; Table C3.2 – Setbacks from Boundaries

eleven will be located towards the southwestern part of the site closest to Springfield's existing L1 Zone. The intention of this is to create a gradation in development intensity and built landscape change that reflects current dwelling density patterns in the contextual area.

Remediation

None is proposed.

Mitigation

As mentioned earlier, the general outcome of rural residential or low-density residential development such as what is being proposed in the ODP is one of high amenity. Therefore there are no mitigation measures proposed in the ODP such as screen or buffer planting other than what is proposed below.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF CONSENT

There are several conditions of consent with regards to landscape matters that are being proposed as part of the ODP. These are as follows:

1. A maximum of two allotments only in the northwest portion of the site. The reason for this is to reduce any potential adverse effects of increased development on this part of the site at the edge of the rural landscape, and furthest from Springfield's L1 Zone.
2. That the smallest sized allotments are located in the southeast portion of the site adjacent to Springfield. This is to ensure that the proposed development on site has the greatest degree of compatibility in landuse pattern with the existing L1 Zone.
3. That maximum building height is not more than 8 metres.
4. That maximum built site coverage is 500m².
5. That there is an 80m dwelling setback from the site boundary shared with the Midland Railway.
6. That any internal building setbacks including setbacks from any ROW or access way boundary be 6m. The reason for this is to ensure that open space and vegetated patterns prevail over built forms within the site.
7. That any fencing shall be limited to a maximum height of 1.2m, be at least 50% open, and be post and rail, traditional sheep, or deer fencing, or solid post and rail or post and wire only. All other fence types are allowed when located within 10m of the side or rear of the principle building. Such fences shall not project forward of the line of the front of the building. The reason for this is to avoid an individual, 'compartmentalised' landscape pattern and to encourage a rural vernacular style of fencing that fosters openness and boundary treatments that are compatible with the contextual area.

CONCLUSION

The primary issue to consider, with regards to landscape effects is whether the visual and landscape changes to the site that would be expected following a rezoning from rural to low-density residential would be sufficient to trigger potential adverse effects on rural amenity and the quality of the environment. Presently the site, currently zoned Rural (outer plains) is characterised by abundant open space and greenery, rather than buildings.

The outcomes expected from the ODP and suite of proffered conditions and rules would see the site change to a low-density residential zoning pattern. A maximum of fifteen dwellings would be accommodated within the 31 hectare site combined with abundant levels of open space and greenery. General levels of amenity are anticipated to be high, as they generally are with such development as what is being proposed here.

To this end, the proposal is not incompatible with its setting for the following reasons:

- i. The site (and subsequent additional structures) are well separated from State Highway 73 where the majority of the public pass through the contextual area.
- ii. The site is well separated from the Russell Range and Kowai River. There is significant open rural landscape between the site and these key landscape features, and so their levels of naturalness will not be affected.
- iii. Site coverage is below 3% which is very low. The proposal limits the numbers of dwellings to fifteen. Open space and greenery will continue to prevail.
- iv. The site is physically bounded by the Midland Railway, Pocock and Annvale Roads. These physical features strengthen the existing cadastral patterning. The site is in a logical place, appended to an existing settlement (Springfield), where a low-density type of residential development could be located which would encourage physical connections with the existing township.
- v. Any neighbours who would have their rural outlook changed following the proposal are limited in number.

For the above reasons, the proposal would have a high degree of compatibility within its local context.

In addition the limited number of dwellings (15) will be compatible with, rather than dominate their setting. This is largely due to the location of the site itself which is near an existing settlement (Springfield). In landscape and visual terms, it is preferable that additional built development in the rural landscape is appended to existing settlements (as opposed to open settings where natural patterns are far more prevalent and vulnerable to the addition of built forms).

Further, the proffered conditions will ensure that the proposal is not incompatible with its rural setting. For these reasons, and considering the details discussed in the body of this assessment, the effects of the proposal would be less than minor with regards to landscape matters.



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October 18, 2017