

Before Hearing Commissioners
at Selwyn

under: the Resource Management Act 1991

in the matter of: Plan Change 59 for the rezoning of Living 2 and
Living 2A to Living West Melton South Zone at West Melton

by: **GW Wilfield Ltd**
Applicant

Statement of Evidence of David John Compton-Moen

Dated: 21 January 2021

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF DAVID JOHN COMPTON-MOEN

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My full name is David John Compton-Moen
- 2 I am a Director at DCM Urban Design Limited, which is a private independent consultancy that provides Landscape and Urban Design services related advice to local authorities and private clients.
- 3 I have worked on Landscape and Urban Design projects for over 20 years. My experience during this time includes:
 - a. Acland Park Subdivision – master planning and landscape design for a 1,000-lot development in Rolleston (2017-current);
 - b. Urban design advice to the Residential Chapter of the Selwyn District Plan Review (2017);
 - c. Graphic material for the Selwyn Area Maps (2016);
 - d. Stage 3 Proposed District Plan Design Guides – Residential (High, Medium and Lower Density and Business Mixed Use Zones) for Queenstown Lakes District(2018-2020).
 - e. Hutt City Council providing urban design evidence for Plan Change 43. The Plan Change proposed two new zones including a Suburban Mixed-use and Medium Density Residential as well as providing the ability for Comprehensive Residential Developments on lots larger than 2,000m² (2017-2019).
 - f. Jacks Point and Henley Downs – Urban Design Advice for QLDC PDP Stages 1 and 2 (2016-2019).
- 4 My qualifications are a Master of Urban Design (hons), Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (hons) and a Bachelor of Resource Studies (Planning). I am a Full Member of the New Zealand Planning Institute and a member of the Urban Design Forum and I have been a Registered Landscape Architect of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects since 2001.
- 5 I am familiar with the application by GW Wilfield Ltd (the *Application*) for a plan change to rezone existing Living 2 and Living 2A land at West Melton to Living (West Melton South) Zone (the *Proposal*), south of State Highway 73 at West Melton (the *Site*).

- 6 I prepared the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that was submitted with the Application.¹

CODE OF CONDUCT

- 7 I have read the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses, and I agree to comply with it. My qualifications as an expert are set out above. I confirm that the issues addressed in this brief of evidence are within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 8 My evidence will provide a summary of the key parts of the Landscape Report. It will then go on to provide specific responses to issues related to amenity and character raised by submitters, and then provide responses to matters raised in the section 42A report (the *Officer's Report*).

- 9 In preparing this evidence I have reviewed:

- The Application;
- National Policy Statement on Urban Development
- Submissions lodged in relation to the Application; and
- The Officer's Report.

SUMMARY OF THE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

A. RECEIVING CHARACTER

- 10 I outlined the character of the receiving environment in my Landscape and Visual Impact assessment Report dated November 2018. This description is still valid describing the Plan Change area as Large Lot residential with an open character. The area is largely flat with bunding running parallel to SH73. There is no vegetation of note within the area.

B. NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- 11 While the proposed density is still relatively low, I consider the increased density proposed consistent with the NPS on Urban Development to improve housing supply. I consider that the Plan Change area is an in-sequence development adding to development

¹ Attached at Appendix 7 of the Application.

capacity in West Melton, but at an appropriate level to ensure adverse effects on existing residents are managed.

C. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER EFFECTS

- 12 In terms of landscape character, compared to the 10 dwellings anticipated in the District Plan for the Living 2A zone, the change in character is considered to be one of scale or density as opposed to land use. The degree of openness will be less with the higher density, but changes in 'openness' is more the result of boundary plantings or shelter belts than additional houses. Many rural-residential areas with allotment sizes up to 2ha in area can have an enclosed character resulting from residents 'compartmentalising' the landscape into smaller units with significant hedgerows. For this proposal, the increased density will result in more houses and the likelihood of smaller scale tree plantings than the currently anticipated 10 lots would, but both development options would result in a 'loss of open character'. The plan change area will be viewed as an extension of the Wilfield residential development and not as a standalone settlement, with any effects on Landscape Character considered to be Minor.

D. LANDSCAPE VALUES EFFECTS

- 13 In terms of Landscape Values, the proposal is zoned for residential purposes, albeit at a lower density. The effects on Landscape Values are considered Less than Minor with the proposal consistent with Objective B4.1.1 and Policies B4.1.10 and B4.1.11.
- 14 The proposed Plan Change has given careful consideration and application of design treatment to such matters as road formation, kerbs, power supply, entry treatment, fencing (MM2, MM3), landscaping, lighting and the like will ensure the retention of open, spacious character. The Plan Change has also provided a buffer of low density lots along the eastern edge of the development to soften the transition into rural land. An overall 'spacious' character is likely to be maintained even with the increased density.
- 15 The Plan Change includes green corridors and pedestrian connections through the development to retain a high level of public amenity and connectivity. With the use of open style fencing onto public spaces, the development will retain a relatively spacious character.
- 16 There are no existing trees, bush or natural features on the site adversely effected. Wilfield Reserve has been landscaped to a high level of amenity, with an open character due to the use of open style fencing along its boundaries. This allows a high level of natural surveillance over the public space also.

E. VISUAL AMENITY

- 17 In terms of visual amenity, the most affected parties are the residents between 557 and 623 Weedons Ross Road, with residual Minor effects following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures. The effects on the residents of Ridgeland Way are considered Minor due to the increased density of the development surrounding them, reducing to Less than Minor with the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures. Adverse effects on openness can be successfully mitigated using post and rail fences and avoiding the installation of close board fencing on reserve boundaries.

RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED BY SUBMITTERS

- 18 The key aspects relating to landscape from submitters are in regard to:
- Extent of the plan change area.
 - Sense of spaciousness / township character
 - Reserves and open space
- 19 In terms of the extent of the plan change area, I agree with the Section 42a and the proposal that it would be poor planning practice to leave a single property zoned Living 2 while rezoning the surrounding Living 2 land. Ideally there is a transition from higher density in the centre of an urban area to a lower density towards the edges. The inclusion of Lot 1 DP391578 into the Plan Change area to be rezoned Living WM South would not affect the overall density of the receiving environment or the sense of spaciousness likely, subject to the same mitigation measures being adopted for this site. Controls on fencing types within the plan change area are an important part of retaining a sense of spaciousness consistent with the existing character of Wilfield and other parts of West Melton.
- 20 The proposed changes to lot size within the plan change area will still maintain an open character, being a relatively low density for a residential area close to the centre of a settlement. Given that parts of the plan change area are already developed, I do not consider a 'minimum average' as the best approach as it will create a 'first in' approach where it is a rush to subdivide and may result in an undesired outcome. The proposed minimum lot size is an appropriate mechanism to control density, and with the proposed controls on fencing, an open character will be maintained. The proposed buffer of larger sites along the eastern boundary will also assist with maintaining the sense of openness.

- 21 In terms of the provision of Reserves and Open Space, the current design is considered appropriate for the number and size of residential lots existing and proposed. Each lot is large with residents having access to their own (large) yard which lessens the need for the provision of public open space. The proposed network of walkways through the area is considered an important aspect of the design, providing connectivity.

RESPONSE TO OFFICER'S REPORT

- 22 I have read the Officer's Section 42a report and I am in agreement with its conclusions, with particular regard to its consideration of the NPS on Urban Development.

CONCLUSIONS

- 23 Overall, it is considered that the residual adverse effects on Landscape Character, Landscape Values and Visual Amenity resulting from the proposal will be Minor, at most, with the area retaining a sense of openness albeit at a higher density than the previous zoning.
- 24 The proposal is consistent with the NPS on Urban Development. The plan change area will be viewed as an extension of Wilfield residential development and not as a standalone settlement.

Dated: 21 January 2020

David John Compton-Moen
