

Before the Selwyn District Council

under: the Resource Management Act 1991

in the matter of: Proposed Private Plan Change 66 to the Operative District
Plan: Maddisons Road, Rolleston

and: **Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited**
Applicant

Statement of Evidence of Anne Eleanor Wilkins (Landscape)

Dated: 23 July 2021

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STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ANNE ELEANOR WILKINS

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My full name is Anne Eleanor Wilkins. I am the Principal Landscape Architect and Urban Designer at Novo Group and have 13 years' experience in landscape architecture and urban design.
- 2 I hold a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture with Honours from Lincoln University. I am a fully Registered Landscape Architect of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (the *NZILA*).
- 3 During my 13 years' experience I have undertaken urban design, master planning, landscape design, and landscape and visual effects assessments across a broad range of project areas across New Zealand. These include subdivisions, commercial developments, infrastructure, coastal works, marina developments, sport and park spaces, reserves, transmission lines, road projects and housing developments, for a wide range of clients such as the NZ Transport Agency, Beca, Christchurch City Council, development groups and local authorities.
- 4 I have written numerous landscape and visual assessments to assess the suitability of developments in various receiving environments, including for Plan Change sites. I have attended hearings, given evidence and provided expertise, on behalf of both applicants and councils for these types of projects.
- 5 I was engaged and provided the Landscape and Visual Assessment for the Plan Change Request 66 to rezone the 27.27 hectares of Rural Inner Plains to Business 2A Zone in Maddisons Road in Rolleston. I provided responses to Requests for Information from Council. I also drafted and prepared the Outline Development Plan (*ODP*) to support the application. My assessment was submitted with the Application, and I have been engaged to provide expert evidence in extension to this.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- 6 Although this is not an Environment Court hearing, I note that in preparing my evidence I have reviewed the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in Part 7 of the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. I have complied with it in preparing my evidence. I confirm that the issues addressed in this statement of evidence are within my area of expertise, except where relying on the opinion or evidence of other witnesses. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 7 My evidence addresses the following:
 - 7.1 The receiving environment, and landscape character and amenity of the proposal site.

- 7.2 Policy matters regarding activities, landscaping and built forms.
 - 7.3 Visual effects assessment from key viewsheds and sensitive audiences.
 - 7.4 Design and mitigation.
 - 7.5 Specific response to issues raised by submitters.
 - 7.6 Response to the Section 42A Report.
- 8 In preparing my evidence, I have reviewed the following statements of evidence:
- 8.1 The Application and key supporting drawings submitted;
 - 8.2 The Outline Development Plan;
 - 8.3 The Boffa Miskell Landscape and Visual Peer Review for Council;
 - 8.4 The Submissions lodged in relation to the Application; and
 - 8.5 The s42 Officers Report.
- 9 The Plan Change assumptions I have based my Assessment upon includes:
- 9.1 A 'worst-case' scenario at the Plan Change site of built heights and without full screening achieved by planting over time.
 - 9.2 Buildings up to 15 metres in height and structures up to 25 metres in height.
 - 9.3 Building setbacks from road boundaries and rural zoned adjacent land by 10 metres.
 - 9.4 Landscape buffers in the form of proposed planted bunding as shown by the Outline Development Plan.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

- 10 As the proposal is an extension of the B2A Zone, I conclude this can be suitably absorbed into the landscape character over the long-term. The industrial and large-scale developments that are both emerging and existing (particularly the IPort and the LPC areas) in the area, mitigates any changes made at the Plan Change site.
- 11 The visual impacts would be the greatest on approximately 14 rural-residential properties off Maddisions Road assessed at moderate-high. This is based on a worst case scenario; landscaping mitigation would screen and soften the northern and eastern boundaries of the site, so that any impact would be reduced over time with the establishment of planting.

- 12 The visual impacts on Rolleston, and any other wider areas (rural-residential areas at a greater distance) are low, due to distance, screening, and the existing character.
- 13 The visual impacts on Recreational Reserves and Industrial Areas are low, due to distance, screening, and the existing character.
- 14 The Officers Report finds that my Assessment suitably and appropriately assesses the site and that no further mitigation requirements are deemed necessary. The findings of the Boffa Miskell Landscape and Visual Assessment Peer Review, and my own Assessment, are largely in alignment.

THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

- 15 The landscape context is dynamic. The environment is intersecting land uses both rural and industrial, rapidly developing future land-uses and expansion, and multiple network corridors.
- 16 The area contains several important movement network corridors in the vicinity. Between the State Highway and Jones Road is the main Canterbury rail corridor, and the Rolleston train station in the near vicinity. There is a busy intersection located at the juncture of SH1, the entrance to Rolleston and Hoskyns Road (access to Maddisons Road).
- 17 The proposal site is an open flat rural paddock, which is mostly exotic grassland, shelterbelts, or dug out earth for crops. The site has one split, unsealed vehicle crossing off Maddisons Road demarked by open steel frame wire gates. Other infrastructure is limited, with a small collection of farming sheds to the north of the site, and several timber power poles traversing across the west of the site.
- 18 The landscape to the north / northeast of the site, is open paddocks and pasture land for farming and rural activities. These are typical Canterbury Plains geometric regular paddocks, delineated by farm fencing and shelterbelts. The built forms of these environments are typically represented by rural farmsheds, woolsheds, and haysheds, which sporadically located across open associated environments, such as paddocks, stock and grazing yards.
- 19 The industrial landscape immediately adjacent to the site, counteracts the surrounding outer rural area. The area is experiencing rapid growth post-earthquake in Christchurch and many of these developments are currently in construction. The area contains both large and medium density sites, with the specific buildings, forms and structures depending on the land-use. A number of larger warehouses and industrial facilities lie north of the State Highway linked to the west of the subject site. Ancillary signage, lights, infrastructure and supporting features are also present typical of an industrial environment.
- 20 There are several large format retail areas on the corner of Jones Road and Hoskyns Road. The site is located immediately adjacent to and intersecting with, two key developing areas: IPort and LPC Port. These two sites form

important contextual features for visual impact, context and for the future of the landscape character.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 21 The proposed scale and site coverage of potential built form is outlined for the B2A zone as per chapter C16 B Zone Buildings. My landscape and visual assessment is undertaken based on the building parameters outlined in **Rule 16.6.2 of Township Volume** and assuming a 'worst case' scenario i.e. the full build out of the site which would be facilitated / enabled under the proposed rezoning.
- 22 **Policy B3.4.32** encourages road frontages of sites to be landscaped or screened. Mitigation, in the form of ODP controls and landscaping requirements along Maddisons Road, will achieve this.
- 23 **Policy B3.4.6** notes few requirements for aesthetic or amenity values are required in Business 2 / 2B zones, and acts to safeguard against potential reverse sensitivity. As the Plan Change is an extension of the Business 2A zone this will promote integration into the wider landscape character and avoid reverse sensitivity effects.
- 24 **Policy B4.3.73** encourages land rezoning to adjoin Business zones of similar character. The Plan Change is adjoining the existing B2A Zone, and therefore will be consistent with the aims of this policy.

ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

Landscape character and amenity

- 25 Amenity is derived from the surrounding rural landscape with a pleasant outlook on to the distant plains to the north. This amenity is significantly diminished by the presence of the highway, the industrial areas, developing areas and the heavily built out township and surrounding spaces related to Rolleston. The Plan Change area will have a small impact on the already highly adapted amenity of the landscape.
- 26 Regarding 'naturalness' in the area; there is very little in the area that is non-modified or not built-up in nature. The area lacks any large areas of open spaces unbroken by features, built forms or roading or transport corridor infrastructure. Similarly, no outstanding features or landscapes are present in the vicinity of the site.
- 27 Aesthetics are mixed, providing no overriding main descriptive appearance or common thread that is unique to the area. Given the nature of various developments over differing eras and times, the result has been mixed built forms of all materiality, of industrial, residential, and rural character. No evident overarching design aesthetic or cohesive appearance exists in the wider area. Amenity in the context of the area is predominately low, or in the least highly inconsistent.
- 28 There are anticipated building heights within the adjoining B2A zone IPort and the storage containers at LPCs Midland Port adjacent. These sites are

likely to further infill with additional built forms. The height limit in these locations, as specified for the Business 2A Zone, is 15m for a building and 25m for a structure¹. The surrounding existing and developing built forms will mitigate any additional height associated with the Plan Change.

- 29 The area is dynamic, expanding and evolving, meaning the landscape is susceptible and adaptable to change. The industrial and large-scale developments (that are both emerging and existing particularly the IPort and the LPC areas) in the area, acts to mitigate any changes made at the Plan Change site. As the extension of the B2A Zone at this site would be appropriately 'enveloped' within the existing development, therefore I conclude it can be suitably absorbed into the landscape character over the long-term.

Visual effects

- 30 The area for the Plan Change use is dependent on a range of factors, such as demand, operational requirements, expansion, or upgrades. Therefore, the assessment is based on visibility, context, and suitability in this location, as well as 'worst case' height limits and density.
- 31 While potential views from wider areas are possible, distance, when paired with atmospheric and other conditional factors is a mitigating factor. Foreground views, such as vegetation or other buildings, would additionally screen and interrupt direct views.

A] Rural-Residential Dwellings Maddisons Road

- 32 There are approximately 18 – 20 dwellings within 1km of the subject site, as shown by Figure One below. The area in closest proximity is a small 'pocket' of lifestyle / rural residential dwellings to the north east of the site, north off Maddisons Road. There are approximately 14 dwellings which are located off the intersection of Weedons Ross Road (721 through to 810 Maddisons Road) which will be in proximity of the site. Wyndom Aviation site is directly north across from the site, which is setback and relatively screened from the street. From site observations and reviews, very few of these rural residential dwellings have direct views onto the site. Many of these properties have established landscaping, trees and fencing preventing any wide sweeping views.
- 33 There is one relatively newly established dwelling directly across the road from the Plan Change site, being approximately 160 metres from the northern boundary as shown in Figure One below. Some low-level earth bunding to the south of the house, has been established presumably to create future buffering from the road.

¹ A structure being less than 10m² in area. District Plan, Township Volume, Rule 16.6.2.



FIGURE 3: Rural residential properties in the vicinity of the subject site
Maddisons Road dwellings (and properties numbers) shown, located in the same rural block or in closest vicinity to the subject site.

Figure One: Rural Residential Properties along Maddisons Road

- 34 The (worst case) scenario of a full build out of the site, with setbacks, and buildings of 15m and structures up to 25m, would change the current view from those parties in proximity down Maddisons Road. As the adjacent B2A Zone, including the IPort area, is currently hidden in part by existing shelterbelts and planting, the change would result in new forms as well as open out more of the surrounding areas of B2A zoning to the south.
- 35 The visual impact for rural residential properties down Maddisons Road, would be **moderate-high**. Landscaping mitigation would screen and soften the northern and eastern boundaries of the site, so this impact could be reduced over time with the establishment of planting. For other rural-residential areas at a wider scale, the impact is less given the distance, or existing screening, resulting in a **low-moderate** impact.
- 36 The Boffa Miskell Peer Review report notes *"I agree with the Landscape Assessment that adverse visual effects from houses accessed off of Maddisons Road are likely to be in the moderate-high category, however, when considered in conjunction with the landscape treatment, it is considered that the visual effects will reduce over time as the planting matures"*.

B] Residential Dwellings Rolleston and Wider Areas

- 37 The main boundary of Rolleston has thick screening to the north. Orientation of most dwellings and commercial / retail spaces are centrally focused so views to the South Island Mountain ranges is limited. As a result, horizon / skyline interruptions are unlikely as views to the north are very minimal. Additionally, the landscape of Rolleston is very flat with no real contrast in elevation, further limiting views to the north towards the Plan Change site.

- 38 The foreground is already very highly developed. The nature of the industrial area is built-up, with large warehouses, 'stacked' shipping containers at the LPC site, and the large warehouses at the IPort site. Anticipated views would be within this context; an already highly modified and developed industrial area. Views will also be experienced at distance, (as the closest dwelling is at least 1.3 km away²) across substantial vegetation, and other buildings therefore any change will largely be absorbed. Given the range of existing mitigating factors, I conclude that the visual effects are **low-moderate**. Similarly, for any other rural-residential areas at a wider scale, the impact is less given the distance, or existing screening, resulting in a **low-moderate** impact.
- 39 The Boffa Miskell report notes in agreement that "*most viewers in the broader landscape will view the Site as part of the wider industrial land use activities (i.e. the Iport and LPC) and would be seen at distances of greater than 1km*".

C] Local Roads

- 40 There are many roads in the vicinity of the works. Roads bordering the site area are Jones Road (Main South Road), Maddisons Road, Weedons Ross Road, and Hoskyns Road. Other major roads in the vicinity include the key State Highway 1, Rolleston Drive, Newtons Road, West Melton Road, Railway Road and Wards Road. The new motorway changes are currently underway adding to the dynamic nature of the changing landscape.
- 41 Speeds along these roads are up to 100km in areas, meaning any visibility would be fleeting while moving at considerable speeds. Additionally, there are many built elements, such as the railway tracks and associated infrastructure, the industrial area and the IPort, that act to counteract any visual impact from the local roads.
- 42 Experienced at speed and temporarily, I conclude that the Plan Change site would be absorbed into the character of the industrial area adjacent. The effects upon road users are **moderate**, yet are only for a limited time (i.e. transient).

D] Recreational Areas

- 43 The Weedons Reserve is situated off the intersection of Weedons Ross Road and Maddisons Road. It contains a golf course, clubrooms, playground, a dog park and a tennis court amongst several other pocket park areas that are ancillary to the larger golf course. Weedons School is located at 135 Weedons Ross Road across from the Reserve, as well as a cemetery located at 179, at the intersection of Maddisons Road.
- 44 The landscape is not pristine and does not rely on wider associated rural landscape values to enhance the recreational use i.e., views out to the wider surrounds and / or rural landscape do not make up the 'pleasantness' of the reserve. The area is generally well screened with vegetation and large tree copses to the west. The views to the site are likely to be very minimal.

² As demarked from the southern boundary of the site.

- 45 Limited visual impacts are anticipated for these sites, given existing surrounding vegetation, views that are limited / temporary only, and used by a limited scope of groups. I conclude that the anticipated effects on these areas are **low**.

E] Industrial Areas

- 46 The industrial area comprises transient viewers, being staff, employees and visitors that will be exposed to views for the short term. The area is already a highly developed landscape being largely visually cluttered, and built-up. The visual amenity is already minimal, such is the nature of the existing and future industrial area. For these reasons, I conclude that the visual effects on this area would be **low**.

DESIGN AND MITIGATION

- 47 There are existing mitigating factors that have been factored into my assessment. Existing mitigating factors include:
- 47.1 Rural residential existing landscaping that screens direct views out to the wider rural landscape, paired with orientation and/ or setbacks that are typical of rural-residential houses.
 - 47.2 The development of buildings and ancillary features adjacent to the site, including the large scale of shipping containers at LPC, which act as a screen as well as visually absorbing the development of the Plan Change site.
 - 47.3 Many audiences are transient viewers, and exposure to (potential) views is temporary, at speed and for a short period of time (Road Users, Reserve Users, Industrial Areas).
- 48 Proposed mitigating factors have been included via the Outline Development Plan (*ODP*). The associated mitigation is:
- 48.1 Recommended to ensure an integration to the surrounding environment. The landscaping is focused on screening at the rural/urban interface.
 - 48.2 The inclusion of planting meets the general requirements of the District Plan, which supports increasing general biodiversity in the rural environment.
 - 48.3 The Landscape Treatment Area One under Rule 24.1.3.13 shall achieve, once matured, a minimum width of 2.5 metres and a minimum height of 6.5 metres. This should include Macrocarpa, Leyland cypress, Radiata pine, Kahikatea, or Totara. The trees shall be a minimum height of 1 metre and at a maximum spacing of 3 metres at the time of planting.
 - 48.4 The Landscape Treatment Area Four under Rule 24.1.3.13 shall achieve, once matured, a minimum width of 5 metres and a minimum height of 8 metres. Trees should include Macrocarpa, Leyland cypress,

Radiata pine, Kahikatea, or Totara, or Pittosporum. The trees shall be a minimum height of 2 metres at the time of planting, and at a maximum spacing of 3 metres.

- 48.5 Standard B2A Rules for Built forms will apply (associated with the design features of any new buildings).
- 49 Further mitigation, in the form of a landscape bund of a minimum height of 2.5m high, has been added to the Outline Development Plan post-lodgement (see Submissions below). I support the inclusion of the bunding to further buffer the rural properties to the east and north.
- 50 I also recommend the early establishment of landscaping, which will give time for screening and growth to provide effective mitigation (though this isn't a requirement under the application). Rule 24.1.3.13 does state landscape planting shall be established and located in accordance with landscape provisions, prior to the construction of any new principal building associated with the Plan Change.
- 51 The Boffa Miskell Peer Review report notes that "*..measures to mitigate have been put forward and amplified*". Overall, the report finds that the landscaping and the changes to the bunding, will be an appropriate edge treatment to the industrial / rural interface. Further suggestions have been made in the report in regard to:
- 51.1 *Providing details on type of planting proposed and growth rates:* I consider that this level of detail at this stage is not required, as the controls on the Landscape Treatment Areas will be suffice to ensure effective planting.
- 51.2 *Management for planting in early years:* I consider this level of detail at this stage is not required, as the planting would be in alignment with the requirements of the mitigation being undertaken as a part of the ODP.
- 51.3 *Retention of shelterbelt along eastern boundary while new planting establishes:* I consider that this would be difficult given the earthworks required to create the earth bund and planting of 1 – 2 metre high trees (at time of planting). The retention of the shelterbelt could be restrictive, by way of shading, root disturbance, clearance disturbance etc, to establishing the bund and planting, which would be at the risk of the future mitigation.

RESPONSE TO SECTION 42A REPORT AND SUBMISSIONS

S Thomas (PC66-0002)

- 52 The submitter notes the uncertainty of the development design and final appearance regarding potential visual impacts. The assessment was done based on a fully established development, and height limit, as would be allowed under the Plan Change, without inclusion of the landscape mitigation. This is to assess on a worst-case scenario, so I note that these effects would not increase, i.e., not be "even greater detrimental impacts" than the

moderate-high specified. Any landscaping would act to potentially lower future effects.

- 53 The submitter requested a landscaping bund be established on the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. Subsequently, the Outline Development Plan was amended to include a 2.5m high (minimum height) landscaped bund along the north, the south, and the east Rural Zone boundaries. I note this will result in substantial screening to the surrounding rural properties once established.

L & C Manion (PC66-0004)

- 54 The submitter is seeking that shipping containers be stacked at a maximum of 3 metres high. The Boffa Miskell report goes into detail of shipping container heights, assessing them as 'buildings', and therefore should be party to the same rules, i.e. being that of a 15 metre height limit (whilst piled on top of one another this would generally entail five stacked containers). I agree with this approach.
- 55 The submitter has concerns on the effectiveness of landscape while it establishes. I agree that the nature of landscaping takes time to grow and be effective in screening; however, I note that the Landscape Treatment Area One and Four is required to be at least 1 and 2 metres at the time of planting so that some immediate screening will be present. This planted height will additionally be added to the height of earth bunding; as noted the Outline Development Plan was amended to include a 2.5m high (minimum height) landscaped bund along the north, the south, and the east Rural Zone boundaries. I conclude that with these requirements the landscaping will be sufficiently effective (and increasingly so over time with growth) but I do encourage the early establishment of planting around boundaries (as I note in the Mitigation section).

Ministry of Education (PC66-0009)

- 56 The Ministry of Education supports landscaping along boundaries as per Landscape Treatment Area 4 that outlines height requirements in order to screen as efficiently as possible.

V Croft (PC66-0013)

- 57 The submitter notes the character of Weedons, outlining the recreation and rural residential properties. The proposal site for the Plan Change will be absorbed by the immediately adjacent industrial land being more closely linked to the character the LPC Site, and the Iport site surrounding this bounded area. I acknowledge the risk of fringe effects, and of industrial creep. However, I believe this site is suitably encapsulated, being bordered on two sides by an existing industrial zone, so that any adverse effect is minimised.

S42 Officers Report

- 58 The Officers Report outlines the concerns raised by the submitters, in alignment with my earlier assessment. Within the Amenity Effects section,

the report finds the site has been suitably and appropriately assessed (paragraph 56 and 57). It is noted that no further mitigation requirements are necessary (paragraph 58).

- 59 I conclude that any potential issues have been addressed in the controls outlined by the Outline Development Plan to suitably mitigate the proposal, and that, overall, both experts (Mr Bentley, Boffa Miskell, and myself) are largely in agreement on matters pertaining to landscape and visual matters.

Dated: 23 July 2021

Anne Eleanor Wilkins