

Selwyn District Council PC68

I am David Somerfield, together with my wife we own the property at 382 Trents Road, Prebbleton. The property comprises approximately 2 hectares of which approximately 4000 sq m on the Trents Road frontage comprises our residence and gardens and the remaining 16000 sqm to the southern boundary comprises our business premises Trents Nursery.

This property adjoins the land in the Application PC68 on our southern and western boundaries.

I do not intend to cover the issues contained in my submission which have been or will be covered by other submitters. Rather I wish to address issues arising from the Application, the applicants planners evidence and the Officers 42a report relating to our property and business specifically.

1. The 42a report covers various procedural matters and in paragraphs 45 to 50 discusses what has been termed “the gap” which includes our property. The report notes that this area is not part of the application but recommends that these 5 lots could be included if it is considered that it is within the scope (which there seems to some question about). We are concerned that our property might be included in an application which we oppose. We are concerned that if the application is approved with our property included and rezoned for residential purposes this could have a detrimental effect on our business by restricting what is currently a complying rural use activity and make us reliant on existing use rights. This may restrict our business operations in the future. While we understand that including the gap properties would provide a neat form to the application land we are disappointed that the 42a Report fails to discuss what effect inclusion of the gap would have on existing complying rural land uses.
2. In paragraph 118 of the section 42a report regarding reverse sensitivity it outlines potential outcomes from a zoning change and concludes with “either results in these existing activities having to close or modify their operations or limits further intensification of the activities”. Like most businesses we are constantly looking at ways in which the business can be improved. This is extremely important for our business as we are operating an intensive horticultural business on a constrained land area. This forces innovation and creativity which is not a bad thing but could be affected if we become reliant on existing use rights and our ability to change and adapt our business becomes restricted.

3. The report continues in paragraph 119 to state that “the sites in question are all bounded by lifestyle blocks or large lots with dwelling in close proximity”. This gives a misleading impression of the current situation. At present we have two dwellings within 100metres of the nursery operation (378 and 386 Trents Road). No dwelling subject to this application would currently be within 200m of the nursery other than 378 Trents Road (and the owner of that property opposes the application) . If the application is approved, we can expect to go from having two dwellings within 100m of the nursery operation to a substantial number of dwellings possibly within 5-10m of our boundary.
4. In paragraph 120 the report states that “ there are a number of examples of plant nurseries located within suburban Christchurch with long established residential neighbours. These two types of activities appear to be able to co-exist without giving rise to complaints or amenity effects”. Mr Clease provides no evidence of this and I am not aware of any similar nursery operation in suburban Christchurch.
5. The applicant’s planner makes similar assertions and in her evidence, describes the nursery “as approximately two thirds of the site is covered with glasshouses”. This is incorrect. We have 21 tunnelhouses of which only 3 are fully enclosed. What she describes as enclosed glasshouses are predominantly crop covers with open sides and ends to allow free air movement but to control watering and direct sunlight. This is quite different to an enclosed glasshouse where issues such as noise and spray might be contained within the structure. On two of the enclosed tunnelhouses we do have, we have fans and heaters operating 24/7 which while they would not exceed noise levels are likely to prove annoying to close neighbours. We also have two outside fans used in the nursery during winter to prevent frost settling on plants. These fans typically operate from midnight to 8am on still nights when frost can be expected. These are also the nights when the noise will be heard more readily.
6. In paragraph 16.7 of the applicant planners evidence, she questions the 100m setback we have requested if the application is approved and she notes that 100m” is greater than the width of our property immediately to the west of the site”. I am not sure what point is trying to be made or what relevance that has, but the 100m proposed comes from NZ Standard 8409:1999: Code of Practice for the Management of Agrichemicals and was obtained from the Otago Regional Council Regional Plan Schedule 4 Good Management Practices for Agricultural Application. While it is a New Zealand Standard we note that ECan does not have any standard on this (or at least one that we could find) ,so have looked further afield. This schedule contains a table indicating that less than 100m proximity to sensitive (residential) areas may cause potential hazard from spray drift to be high. Trents uses a variety of pesticides and other sprays that may be considered potentially hazardous and require application by a certified Growsafe applicator.

7. In the same paragraph the planner suggests that “the appropriate layout in the vicinity of the nursery” be dealt with at the subdivision stage. If, however this application is approved, what protection is provided to the adjoining rural land user through the subdivision consent process if a subdivision plan is submitted that complies with the approved application? I believe this is particularly relevant given, as several witnesses have noted, there is a lack of detail and substance on a number of issues in this application. Therefore, in my view these issues should be dealt with at this time.
8. Trents Nursery has operated from this property for coming up to 40 years and over that time has continued to employ people from the Prebbleton community and surrounding districts. The business generates revenue in the order of \$2m per hectare per annum(not the low intensity market gardening activity the applicants solicitor suggests)and contributes approximately \$3m per annum to the local area through wages and products and services purchased. While the applicants consultants talk about the construction jobs created if this application proceeds these are one off. Trents has been contributing significantly to the local economy for nearly 40 years and will continue to do so in the future if able to continue operating. Due to the nature of the business which involves the freighting of perishable product throughout New Zealand, good proximity to transport links is required. That, together with the high capital cost in establishing a nursery mean relocation to a more rural location is not feasible. If the application is approved we hold concerns for the longer term future of what is a complying long standing business.
9. For this reason and the broader planning and environmental issues raised or to be raised by other submitters we ask that the application be declined or if approved limits be placed on the applicant land adjacent to our property as set out in our submission including:
 - Minimum lot size 5000sqm
 - 100 metre setback from the boundary for any dwellings
 - No complaint covenant for adjoining properties
 - No access to Trents Road until roading and roundabout upgrades have been completed
 - Assessment of the existing water quality and quantity and effect of the proposed development on groundwater supply

While the applicant may consider matters such as setback or no complaint covenants a rare and unusual requirement I am aware such requirements in other situations where residential land adjoins other land uses.