

BEFORE THE SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER of Proposed Plan Change 68: West Prebbleton

REQUESTOR Urban Holdings Ltd, Suburban Estates Ltd and
Cairnbrae Developments Ltd

Summary Evidence of Patricia Harte
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is Patricia Harte.

1.2 I have the qualifications and experience as set out in my primary statement of evidence in this matter.

1.3 The following summarises my evidence, as well as commenting on additional matters that have arisen in planning evidence of submitters.

2 PLANNING RESPONSE

2.1 Plan Change 68 is a request for rezoning of land in south-west Prebbleton for residential purposes. No new provisions are proposed or sought other than a change to the planning maps in the District Plan and the inclusion of a specific outline development plan, and associated policy to apply to the land being rezoned.

2.2 In my opinion PC68 is a **logical planning response** to provide for the growth of Prebbleton to enable more housing to meet existing and future demand.

2.3 In recent times there have been numerous assessments of demand and available capacity for housing by central, regional, and local government, the Greater Christchurch Partnership, economists and property analysts. In relation to Prebbleton, and indeed other centres such as Rolleston and Lincoln, many of these assessments for the short-medium term have underestimated demand which has increased despite earthquake demand being very largely fulfilled.

2.4 Until relatively recently Prebbleton has been able to provide medium priced sections enabling hundreds of new houses to be established. This has been positive for the population of Greater Christchurch especially those who needed to relocate after the earthquakes.

2.5 The economic assessments prepared for the applicants and the evidence of Mr. Sellars (valuer) conclude that there are now **no available sections** for purchase and therefore there is a significant unmet demand in Prebbleton. This means that the short-term demand (0-3 years) cannot be met, let alone the medium-term demand (3-10 years). This shortfall has resulted in significant price increases making sections and housing increasing unaffordable for many people and households.

2.6 To date the various planning regimes have been lagging in responding to this issue with no new zonings being proposed for Prebbleton or the Selwyn

District. I therefore consider PC68 is a positive step forward enabling an extension of the Living Z zone in south-west Prebbleton.

3 SITE SUITABILITY

3.1 The PC68 site is well suited to provide for an extension of residential zoning in Prebbleton. In particular:

- (a) Its location ensures that the Prebbleton residential area can extend to the south-west noting that
 - (i) To the east PC68 adjoins **Sterling Park** which is now a fully developed residential area sitting between Hamptons, Springs and Trents Road. Connections between Sterling Park and new residential development to the west, such as PC68, have already been planned and created in the form of a connecting road (Guilder Drive), two greenspace cycle routes and a further road connection through Guinea Place.
 - (ii) To the west is Shands Road and south is Hamptons Road, both of which are natural boundaries for Prebbleton.
 - (iii) The development history of Prebbleton involves extensive rural-residential development, in the western and southern areas. This form of development was not planned as such and significantly limits the potential for conversion of these areas to full residential. To provide for residential growth it is necessary to "leapfrog" these areas.
- (b) Rural Residential Area 7 sits in the middle of the proposed PC68 site. RRA7 was recognised in the Council's 2014 **Rural Residential Strategy** as needing to be "future proofed" for residential density development as it sits within the "*Preferred Urban Form*", and it assists in "*achieving the long term concentric urban form of the Township and supporting growth west of Springs Road as far as Shands Road, rather than developing ribbon development along Springs Road*". This recognition has been carried through to the Proposed District Plan which identifies this central area as "Urban Growth Overlay". The Rural Residential Strategy is one of few documents that acknowledges the need for, and provides, a strategic direction for Prebbleton's growth.
- (c) PC68 has sufficient area (67.5ha) to enable higher densities to be provided at scale.

- (d) The site can be serviced for residential development utilising existing Council plans to increase the number water supply wells in the area and to upgrade the intersections of Trents and Shands Road, Hamptons and Shands Road and Hamptons and Springs Road, all of which will serve the development.
- (e) The rezoning is consistent with the RMA and relevant national, regional and district policies and plans as set out in detail in my evidence in paragraphs 7.2 to 7.15.

4 OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4.1 The outline development plan for PC68 contains the basic elements of the development area including connections with adjoining areas. Two of these elements and their identification have been refined through the process of preparing the plan change request and responding to the section 42A reports. These elements are:

- ~~(a)~~ **Cycle routes** – Cycle routes have been identified along the primary north-south roads and the east-west road and eastern north-south secondary roads.
- (b) **Frontage upgrades** – Frontage upgrade notations have been added for the lengths of the plan change area adjoining Trents Road and Hamptons Road. This notation requires the developers of the plan change to upgrade these frontages to the usual urban standard involving wider carriageways, footpaths and cycleways. This will improve the efficiency and safety of the road with the increased traffic volumes generated by the plan change. This is something that many submitters requested but would, I understand, be a normal requirement of greenfield development.

4.2 The amended ODP (R6) is attached to my evidence in chief.

4.3 ADDITIONS AND REDUCTIONS IN THE AREA TO BE REZONED

4.4 There are submissions from landowners within the wider Trents, Springs, Hamptons, Shands block requesting that their properties be rezoned. Some wish to have the same zoning as PC68, i.e., Living Z, while some seek lots in the order of 5000m².

4.5 The Applicants, who own a large proportion of the rural zoned land within the block, are a group formed with the common aim of full residential zoning for their combined sites. I understand that they approached owners of the remaining properties to ascertain whether they wished to be involved in

formally requesting residential rezoning. Some owners agreed and others did not. Regarding these various requests:

- (a) Rezoning of the five properties fronting Trents Road between Sterling Park and the PC68 area, referred to as “the gap” in the s42A report, would enable the Plan Change to be fully integrated with Sterling Park. It would also avoid these lots being enclosed by the residential development, although like Mr. Cleese I do not consider this is a significant issue.
- (b) I consider the rezoning requests seeking subdivision size in the order of 5000m² would be an inefficient use of this block which is well suited for standard residential development. I also note that this would create the need for further leapfrogging should more residential rezoning in the area be required in the future.
- (c) I have no issues with the rezoning of 701 Shands Road (S.J. Shamy) as part of PC68, again for the reasons stated by Mr. Cleese.
- (d) I agree with the 42A report proposal that two small areas could be rezoned as “consequential amendments”. One is a narrow site at 184 Hamptons Road. The other property is on the northeast corner of Shands and Hamptons Road. This property is owned by the Council for roading purposes as it is needed to construct the proposed roundabout. Given these circumstances I do not think it is necessary for it to be included.

5 ROADING

- 5.1 Modelling by Councils transportation consultants and by Mr. Smith of Abley on behalf of the Applicants has been undertaken to enable assessment of the impact of the traffic generated by PC68.
- 5.2 This modelling was based on the already planned roading works in the area, namely new roundabouts at the intersections of Shands and Trents, Shands and Hamptons and Springs and Hamptons. The modelling has indicated periods when the level of service (LOS) at the Shands/Trents intersections in particular is poor, e.g., LOS D and E which involves potential delays for motorists for period of up to 30 seconds. These lower levels of service generally occur in the morning peak. These poor levels of service can be overcome by increasing the capacity of the proposed roundabouts i.e., from single lane to dual lane, or a combination of these options.
- 5.3 Mr. Smith has modelled suggested changes to the Shands/Trents roundabout and advised his support for their enhancement which will deliver benefits to PC68 traffic as well as wider benefits to existing and

future road users in the vicinity of the site. On this basis it is considered appropriate to stage the development with the first stage of 120 lots becoming available after the construction of the Shands/Trents roundabout and the second stage i.e. the remainder, becoming available after the Shands/Hamptons roundabout is constructed and seal widening of Trents and Hamptons Roads is completed.

6 DENSITY

- 6.1 The **Christchurch City Council** submission raises the matter of what is the appropriate minimum density requirement for this (and other) plan change areas and requests that 15hh/ha be adopted. I consider at this stage that the 12 households per hectare proposed in PC68 is an appropriate **minimum** while acknowledging that applying a minimum density over a large area is a coarse control. This density approach will be refined in two main ways. Firstly, the actual design of the subdivision will provide opportunities to create discrete density areas. Secondly, since preparing my evidence the RMA (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act has been passed. This adds another dimension to consideration of density in residential zones. Selwyn District Council have confirmed that before accepting any rezoning plan change, they will formally vary these plan changes to include medium residential density provisions. In these circumstances I consider that there is probably little point in refining the current Living Z rules for this greenfield site as it will soon be subject to a variation under this new legislation.
- 6.2 Despite the request by the City Council to adopt a minimum density of 15hh/ha Mr. Langman in his evidence at para 116 states that the higher densities that may follow adoption of MDR standards raises “*significant issues in relation to infrastructure capacity and other effects that may potentially occur as a result of the requested rezoning*”. This response raises several questions. Firstly, has there been a calculation of the potential difference between 15hh/ha and adoption of the MDR minimum density standards? The MDR provisions apply to existing sites with the aim to densify existing residential areas and thereby make better use of the land resource. It would seem likely that only a small proportion of the new lots in the PC68 are would be purchased with the aim of having multiple houses on each lot. I suggest that the new MDR provisions are in fact unlikely to result in a density dissimilar to the 15hha /ha requested by the City Council. If that is the case, then it is difficult to understand why the MDR provisions have been raised as an issue.
- 6.3 Mr. Williamson in his paras 64-65 refers to the s42A report approach to medium density provisions. He criticizes the statement in that report that

"there is no guarantee that land will be developed to the full extent enabled by the medium density provisions". He then states that "it is entirely with the powers and functions of Councils to direct minimum densities, and in my view to not do so is a contradiction to the purpose of the 2021 Amendment Act". The Amendment Act density standard in clause 10 of Schedule 3A states "There must be no more than 3 residential units per site." In my opinion this reads as a maximum not a minimum density and there is no specification in the Amendment Act as to what site size is required. I therefore agree with Mr. Cleese that at this stage it cannot be assumed that the maximum "density" will occur even though it may be enabled.

7 NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT (NPS-UD)

7.1 Mr. Williamson's evidence does not assess PC68 against the NPS-UD. This is surprising as it is a directive national planning document with the purpose of achieving *well-functioning urban environments* and *"planning decisions to improve housing affordability by supporting competitive land and development markets"*. It is therefore directly relevant to the consideration of this Plan Change.

7.2 In contrast, Mr. Langman discusses the NPS -UD and its relationship with the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement and other planning policy documents at length. His assessment addresses the Implementation section of the NPS-UD which contains a list of matters councils must do to give effect to the objectives and policies of the NPS. For plan changes providing for developments that are "unanticipated or out-of-sequence" and which provide for "significant development capacity" councils

"...must have particular regard to the development capacity provided by the plan change if that development capacity:

- Would contribute to a well-functioning environment

- Is well connected along transport corridors (Subpart 2 - Responsive Planning 3.8)

7.3 Mr. Langman concludes that while PC68 adds significant capacity for housing in the local context, "significant development capacity" must be assessed in relation to Greater Christchurch. In my opinion that cannot be correct as it would mean the only unanticipated plan changes that could be considered and accepted are ones which provide for thousands of sections. Ignoring the fact that it is very unlikely that such a large area would exist or could be easily serviced, this restrictive approach would eliminate consideration of all areas which are logical and consolidated extensions of

Christchurch or the townships in Selwyn and Waimakariri. This is despite there being an urgent need to provide for more housing in all these areas.

- 7.4 Another reason Mr. Langman gives for declining PC68 is that the cumulative effects of proposed greenfield expansions would likely compromise opportunities for intensification elsewhere in greater Christchurch and impact on servicing. He also refers to a spatial planning exercise that is being carried on by the Greater Christchurch Partnership and that approving PC68 would compromise future options for greenfield development. I consider these statements to be over-generalisations. I cannot see how enabling development in this part of Prebbleton would impact on servicing elsewhere. If the spatial planning exercise adopts sound planning criteria for identifying growth areas, I am sure it would conclude that the PC68 area is well located to provide for the growth of Prebbleton.
- 7.5 The third matter I wish to comment on is the relationship between the NPS-UD and the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS). Chapter 6 of the CRPS sets out a framework for recovery from the earthquakes. Objective 6.2.1. contains a series of criteria for the location of greenfield areas including protection of outstanding natural landscapes, maintaining water quality, integration of infrastructure with land development and protection from natural hazards. PC68 generally satisfies these matters. The one requirement it does not satisfy is that it does not fall within an identified greenfield priority area or future development area in Map A referred to in Chapter 6 of the CRPS. This is not surprising as the extent of growth demand for housing was not anticipated by most planning documents associated with the Greater Christchurch area. This very situation has been recognised in the NPS-UD which provides for a “responsive planning” approach(in Part 3 Subpart 2) for consideration of plan changes that are not provided for in current planning documents, in particular in clause 3.8 **Unanticipated or out of sequence developments.**
- 7.6 Mr. Langman provides a lengthy discussion on this matter in which I understand him to say that the prescriptive requirements of the CRPS (relating to avoiding new developments outside Greenfield priority areas shown in Map A)) must still be adhered to despite that fact the NPS-UD which is a national planning document requires a responsive planning approach. I agree with Mr. Langman that plan changes for unanticipated greenfield development must be fully scrutinised and not automatically approved. However, in my opinion the difficult situation that has arisen with growth demand and needs occurring at an unanticipated rate, is acknowledged and provided for in the NPS-UD. It enables rezoning proposals to be assessed against specific criteria and their general merits. To still require developments to meet the requirements of Map A in the

CRPS (regardless of their merits) would be to negate the ability to be responsive.

8 IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES

- 8.1 Mr. Williamson has raised several issues relating to how this plan change can, or will be, implemented. In particular, he queries whether services can be provided, how the matters listed in the ODP text (narrative) can be implemented, and how funding for servicing can be achieved. He also questions how urban design elements referred in evidence and in the ODP can be implemented. Specifically, Mr. Williamson considers that the plan change should include provision for financial contributions to achieve various elements of the development. Some of these matters are covered in the summary evidence of Mr. Hall
- 8.2 While I am not directly involved in all the post-zoning processes associated with Greenfield residential development, I am familiar with various development contributions regimes and with the working relationships that are part of the development process. Based on this understanding, I do not share Mr. Williamson's apparent concerns that things will go wrong.
- 8.3 Firstly, the applicants are all experienced, local, residential developers and so are fully aware to the processes that need to be gone through. They are also very familiar with the subdivision process which sets out, through conditions, all their obligations relating to installation of services (at their cost) as well as development contributions set out in the Council's Development Contributions Policy 2021. In addition, this Policy specifically provides for "developer agreements" for additional works with the Applicants part funding works which also benefit the community.
- 8.4 Mr. Williamson has also raised concerns about how the ODP and its text can be implemented. The approach of the Plan to date has involved a requirement in the subdivision section that subdivision applications are to be in accordance with the ODP for an area. If a subdivision is not in compliance, it becomes a discretionary activity and the non-complying matters assessed in detail. In addition, the text of the ODP gets inserted into the District Plan as a policy thereby doubly ensuring all important matters are considered at the subdivision stage.
- 8.5 This approach has worked for many years.
- 8.6 Regarding the specific matter of the adjoining roundabouts needing to be constructed prior to stages of development I have addressed this in 14.3 of my evidence where I propose the following (or similar) performance standards:

"Following completion of the Shands/Trents roundabout 120 lots can be made available to the public

"Following completion of the Shands/Hamptons roundabout, the seal widening of Trents Road and Hamptons Road the remainder of the lots can be made available to the public"

- 8.7 I state that this provision could be included in the ODP text and/or the District Plan subdivision provisions ensuring that it can and will be enforced. Alternative wording may be possible, for example there could be land use controls on the staging of houses being built or residential activity occurring.

9 ZONING

- 9.1 I note that the S42A report refers to PC68 requesting rezoning of most of the site as Living Z *"with a strip of low-density Living X zoning (minimum 1,500m²) along the Shands Road frontage"*. For the record Living Z zoning was requested for the whole PC68 site but with a requirement in the ODP that the land fronting Shands Road have a minimum lot size of 1,500m².

10 REVERSE SENSITIVITY

- 10.1 While there is a potential for reverse sensitivity effects to arise when residential development moves into an area where farming and other productive activities are currently carried out, I consider that these are unlikely in this plan change area.
- 10.2 This is due firstly to there being no current activities such as those mentioned in the s42A report (intensive pig farming, dairy sheds and effluent ponds) in the vicinity. The parts of the landscaping business on the corner of Springs and Shands Road which adjoin the PC68 area appear to be pasture and nursery trees and shelter belts with the working area further west. The nursery business at 382 Trents Road appears to have most of its operations within glasshouses. Secondly, the design of the development can accommodate larger section sizes to enable greater distance between these sites and new housing.

11 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

- 11.1 Mr. Langman refers to the lack of assessment of the Plan Change regarding it being a "well-functioning urban environment" as defined in Policy 1 of the NPS-UD. In particular, he queries whether the Plan Change will "support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions" (Policy 1e).
- 11.2 I understand that transport emissions are a significant on-going generator of greenhouse gas associated with residential areas. Mr. Smith's evidence

considers sustainability of the Plan Change in detail (at paras 12.23-33) and concludes that:

- The site is 16km from Christchurch central city which is closer than all other satellite towns and is comparable, and in many cases, less than travel within the City boundary. I have also noted in my evidence that some of the main employment areas such as Sockburn and Wigram are very close to Prebbleton in terms of commuting.
- While the Plan Change site is not well served by public transport there is real potential to improve the public transport provision to better connect the site with Christchurch and Lincoln.
- The site is well connected for walking and cycling to the Prebbleton town centre (including supermarket and new commercial centre), school and key destinations within Prebbleton. In addition changes in transport modes provide for more flexible options, making what was a car trip now a feasible bike or scooter trip.
- The PC68 area will be provided with fibre which will enable working from home opportunities, which is of course increasingly more common.

11.3 Regarding the comparison of PC68 with intensification of existing residential areas the NPS-UD contemplates expansion as well as intensification. Therefore, in my opinion, it is not appropriate to compare the two forms of increasing capacity in the context of supporting a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

11.4 Regarding the CRPS and greenhouse gas emissions, Objective 6.2.2 of the CRPS supports consolidation of urban areas. The explanation for this objective specifically states that a key reason for promoting or requiring consolidation is that this form of development "*is most likely to minimise the adverse effects for work, education, business and recreation*". It is perhaps surprising then that the latest and only amendment to the CRPS providing for greenfield development (Change 1) was the addition of two "Future development Areas" at Rolleston which are 21.7 to 27.4 km from the central Christchurch as compared to PC68 which is 16km.

12 CONCLUSION

12.1 I agree with the conclusions reached in the 42A Report of Mr. Cleese and his recommendation that Plan Change 68 be granted. In particular I agree that:

- (a) It will promote the social and economic wellbeing of current and future residents of Prebbleton and potentially greater Christchurch by providing more land for residential development
- (b) It gives effect to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, and
- (c) It is the most efficient method of promptly achieving the outcome of additional land for residential development in Prebbleton.