

**BEFORE HEARING COMMISSIONER  
FOR SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**UNDER**

the Resource Management  
Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER**

Private Plan Change Request  
74 (PC74)

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**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF HUGH ANTHONY NICHOLSON  
ON BEHALF OF SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**URBAN DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE**

**24 March 2023**

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## **1. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

- 1.1 My name is Hugh Anthony Nicholson. I have prepared a Statement of Evidence for the Selwyn District Council with respect to Plan Change 74 to the Selwyn District Plan. My qualifications and experience are set out in that statement.

## **2. AREAS OF AGREEMENT**

- 2.1 I have reviewed Ms White's evidence (dated 13 March 2023) and note that in most respects we are in agreement<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.2 In particular we are both of opinion that the development of this site could contribute to a compact and consolidated urban form for West Melton.
- 2.3 We agree that provision for a future road connection to the east would be a good urban design outcome, and I note that the ODP has been amended to include two indicative road connections to this land.
- 2.4 We also agree that a post and rail fence would be appropriate along the northern (Halkett Road) and southern (SH73) boundaries, and this has been included in the updated ODP narrative.

## **3. AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT**

- 3.1 A key issue / area of difference is the appropriate density requirements for the plan change. Ms White considers that the insertion of a minimum density requirement is not necessary, but that if the decision makers were of a mind to impose a minimum density, she considers that 8hh/ha would be appropriate<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.2 I acknowledge the value of the density case studies and density scenarios prepared by Ms White, and consider that they provide useful modelling. I

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<sup>1</sup> *Joint Witness Statement - Urban Design*, Hearing 30.6: Rezone – West Melton, 23 February 2023

<sup>2</sup> PC74 Evidence of Lauren White – Urban Design, 13 March 2023, paragraphs 28 and 29.

note that they represent one of many possible solutions, and that they do not include a 10hh/ha density scenario.

- 3.3 In the light of the density scenarios prepared by Ms White I have revised the recommendation in my statement of evidence for a minimum density from 12hh/ha down to 10hh/ha. In making this recommendation for a minimum density of 10hh/ha I am mindful that this is a low density in the wider Canterbury context and that it is broadly comparable with the density of similar rural towns such as Prebbleton.
- 3.4 While character is one of the urban design issues relating to density I note that there are a range of other urban design benefits from an increased density<sup>3</sup> including:
- (a) *Social*: improving social interaction and diversity, and improving access to and the viability of community services;
  - (b) *Economic*: improving the economic viability of development and infrastructure;
  - (c) *Transport*: supporting increased usage of public transport and reducing car travel;
  - (d) *Environmental*: increasing energy efficiency and decreasing resource consumption and pollution, reducing demand for land.
- 3.5 While I have some sympathy with submitters who are concerned at the potential change to the residential character of West Melton, I am also mindful of the direction of the NPS:UD that changes to amenity values such as landscape character and visual amenity need to be balanced against the positive effects of increased housing supply and choice, and are not, of themselves, an adverse effect.
- 3.6 I agree with Ms White that minimum densities are a blunt tool and in an ideal world a site-specific design response would be preferable. However, I note that under the current plan change process only a high level spatial plan is possible in the form of an ODP, and that a requirement for a minimum

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<sup>3</sup> Carmona, M., Heath, T., Oc, T., Tiesdell, S., *Public Places, Urban Spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design*, 2006, Architectural Press, p.183

density is a reasonable method for giving direction to future subdivision plans.

- 3.7 The second area of disagreement with Ms White is with regard to the provision of a footpath along the southern boundary (SH73) of the site connecting to the existing crossing facility. In my opinion a shared path in this location would improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the site, and to provide a more direct and legible alternative to the Rossington Drive connection.
- 3.8 The pathway would be on State Highway and would require the agreement of Waka Kotahi and potential changes to the highway corridor. I note that shared paths are being provided on sections of SH73 as part of the SH73 West Melton Improvements currently under construction.
- 3.9 Alternatively a shared path may be able to be provided at the southern end of the site through Selwyn District Council owned land and utility reserve at Lots 200 & 214, DP398852, back to Rossington Drive. This would require further investigation but could provide an alternative route for pedestrians and cyclists.

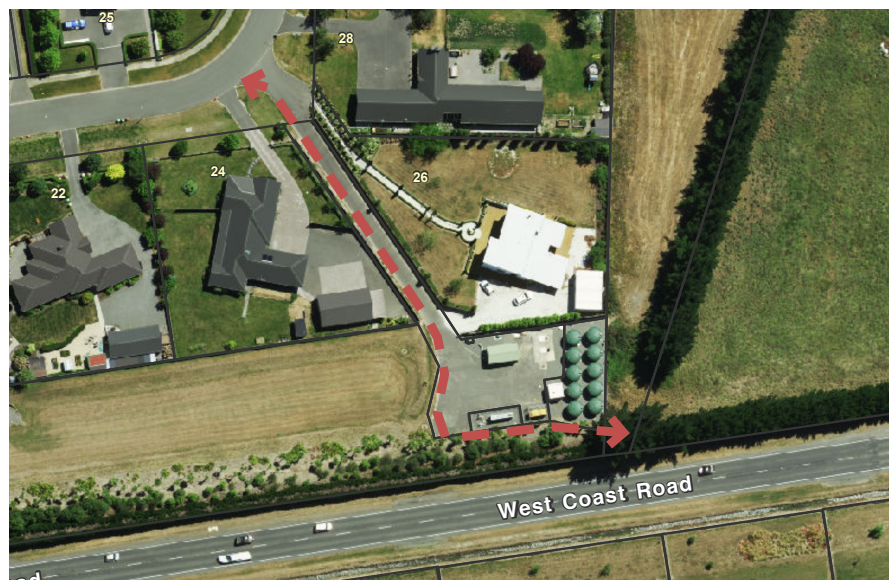


Figure 1: Potential alternative route for shared path from southern end of ODP

- 3.10 In my opinion a shared path should be included at the southern end of the ODP, either along SH73 to the existing crossing facility, or through the

existing utility reserve back to Rossington Drive. I note that Ms White agrees that a footpath along SH73 would provide additional choice for pedestrians and cyclists, however, she considers that the proposed connection along Rossington Drive is adequate<sup>4</sup>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'HN' inside a square border.

**Hugh Nicholson**

13 September 2022

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<sup>4</sup> PC74 Evidence of Lauren White – Urban Design, 13 March 2023, paragraph 19.