

EVIDENCE IN THE MATTER OF PC 75

Evidence of Gabi Wolfer, Senior Urban Designer/Town Planner, Selwyn District Council

1. QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- 1.1. My full name is Gabriele Tanja Wolfer. I have been working for Selwyn District Council as their Urban Designer/Town Planner for the past 10 years. I am a senior member of the Policy and Strategy team. I hold a Master's Degree in Urban and Spatial Planning from the Technical University Kaiserslautern, Germany. I am an Associate member of the New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI) and a member of the Architectural Institute Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 2.1. Although this is a Council hearing, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note and that I agree to comply with it. My qualifications as an expert are set out above. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express, and that this evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person.

3. EVIDENCE SCOPE

- 3.1. My evidence focuses on demonstrating that the proposed private plan change request is practical and appropriate within an Urban Design/Town planning context.
- 3.2. I have reviewed the request and the submissions and have addressed them as part of my assessment where they relate to my area of expertise.
- 3.3. Throughout this document I will be referencing the applicants private plan change request report with ('request'), Appendix D - Integrated Transport Assessment ('transport assessment') and Appendix E- Landscape and Visual Assessment ('landscape assessment').

4. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- 4.1. The following statutory and non-statutory documents provide strategic direction for this plan change request and are relevant for my assessment.
- 4.2. Canterbury Policy Statement (CRPS 2013) Chapters 5 (Land use and infrastructure) and 6 (Recovery and Rebuilding of Greater Christchurch), in particular Objectives 5.2.2, 6. 2.1 to 6.2.6, Policy 6.3.1, Policy 6.3.3 and Policy 6.3.6 and 6.3.7.
- 4.3. CPRS 2013 Policy 6.3.2 refers to 'good urban design' and refers to the amended principles (see **Appendix 1**) of the (non-statutory) NZ Urban Design protocol 2005.
- 4.4. Selwyn District Plan (the 'Plan'). The following objectives and policies relating to rezoning requests have been used as a) a framework and b) to establish if the plan change request enables development that achieves these outcomes.
- 4.5. Township Volume/Growth of townships/ Residential and Business Development/ Objectives B4.3.1, B4.3.3- B4.3.8/Policies B4.3.3-B4.3.8, B4.3.10, B4.3.11; Residential density/ Objectives B4.1.1 and B4.1.2, Policies B4.1.10- B4.1.13; Rolleston specific - Policy B4.3.75.

5. PROPOSAL

- 5.1. Private Plan change 75 requests the rezoning of approximately 24.7 hectares of Rural (Inner Plains) zoned land to Living Z zoned land. The site is situated at 151 and 153 Lincoln Rolleston Road in Rolleston. The proposed land use is, apart from one small pocket of Medium Density, for Low Density housing. The proposal seeks to meet a target density rate of 12hh/ha achieving approximately 280 sections. The ODP indicates a single centrally located reserve area.
- 5.2. An Outline Development Plan illustrating the proposed changes is part of this proposal.

6. SUBMISSIONS

- 6.1. Council received six submissions, of which two are considered relevant to urban design and thus addressed within this report.

7. CONTEXT

- 7.1. I am a local resident and have a good understanding of the site in the context of the overall township. I am familiar with the site and its surroundings and have undertaken a specific site visit on 11/08/2021 with my colleague Daniel Meehan, who is Council's Surface Water Engineer.
- 7.2. To be able to comment on the proposal and its implications on the individual and the wider community it is imperative to address them in context. This is where the principle of Tūrangawaewae – the sense of place and belonging needs to be referenced. Context is required to establish: (a) if the request integrates with the surrounding development; (b) whether there are any amenity, sites of cultural interest or potentially adverse reverse sensitivity effects that could compromise the efficient operation of established activities operating on adjacent properties that need to be taken into account, and if so if they have been adequately addressed by the applicant.
- 7.3. I consider the proposed site to integrate well with the surrounding environment and will be visually perceived as an extension to the existing residential subdivision (Falcon's Landing) to the North, which is of a similar scale and density. The proposed site and sites adjoining to the East, West and South have a rural-residential character typical for lifestyle block properties in the Selwyn District, consisting of clusters of buildings and structures surrounded by open fields used for non-intensive farming purposes delineated by shelterbelt plantings.
- 7.4. To reiterate above, the proposed site is influenced by recent residential activities to the North, existing rural-residential activities to the East and proposed residential activities to the South and West, should the request for PP78 be granted, effectively enclosing the site on three sides with residential development.
- 7.5. Lincoln Rolleston Road provides a physical boundary to the site and a visual and physical buffer to pastoral landuses and rural-residential activities to the East. I support the applicant's reference in section 3.5 of the assessment 'to maintain aspects of openness though management of fencing along Lincoln Rolleston Road.'
- 7.6. I conclude that the site assessed within context does not trigger any apparent conflict with surrounding sites and their activities. Vice versa I do not consider that there will be any negative aspects from existing activities in the immediate surrounds on the residential amenity of the site. If anything the open paddocks to the East will provide outlook and views for dwellings along Lincoln Rolleston Road.

8. URBAN DESIGN MATTERS

- 8.1. The following assessment identifies urban design matters that apply to the application and respond to submission points, the Outline Development Plan and the mitigation measures provided within the landscape and visual assessment. Where appropriate comments from other Council staff have been included.

Urban Form

- 8.2. The site is within the urban limit of Selwyn Road (Rolleston Structure Plan 2009) and is within the areas identified for future development in the framework documentation of the CRPS (see policy 6.2.2) and Our SPACE future development strategy. Both documents identify the site as a future development area (FDA). Policy B4.3.3 states that zoning patterns should avoid leaving a patch of land zoned rural surrounded by Living zones. While this is currently not the case, future development surrounding the site to the south and west are already proposed (PC78).
- 8.3. The site is physically contained to the north by existing residential development and to the east by Lincoln Rolleston Road.
- 8.4. Situated currently 'on the fringe' of Rolleston, should PC78 and other residential development in the vicinity go ahead this portion un-developed would end up being the 'middle of the doughnut'. This outcome would not only go against achieving the compact and consolidated urban form identified in the Structure Plan, Our SPACE, the CRPS and Policy B4.3.3, but may also create reverse-sensitivity conflicts should rural based activities continue on the site.
- 8.5. I consider that the granting to the request to apply the Living Z Zone and incorporate an ODP to coordinate development in the future in this location will help to provide growth in the southern end of the Rolleston Township in a planned and coherent manner.
- 8.6. I consider that developing the proposed site to a residential density will be in keeping with the Greater Christchurch's settlement pattern and achieve a consolidated expansion of the existing urban areas within Rolleston Township.

Amenity, Character and Outlook

- 8.7. I consider the status quo of the site, as well as proposed and consented development in the immediate vicinity as the receiving environment. Existing residential development to the North, proposed future residential development (PC 78) to the West and South are cumulatively having an impact on the amenity, character and outlook of the site.
- 8.8. Part of the existing natural characteristics of the site, (and adjoining sites to the West, South and East) include a flat topography, large open grass fields with clusters of vegetation framed by tall shelterbelt plantings, which allows for intermittent views to the Alps and the Port Hills.
- 8.9. The physical site characteristics to the North can be summarised as being sub-urban, with pre-dominantly single-storey standalone housing on smaller, residential sections.
- 8.10. The site itself (and adjacent sites to the South and West, as well as land across Lincoln Rolleston Road) has a rural-residential character. Built form is usually larger in scale than on residential sites and often accompanied by additional structures resulting in clusters of built development situated within large open fields.

- 8.11. The proposal will alter the site to be aligned with the residential sub-urban character to the North.
- 8.12. I support the distribution of density on the proposed ODP, concentrating MD in the centre, while using lower density site as a transition buffer to adjacent land uses to mitigate some of the effects of the proposal on the receiving environment.
- 8.13. Amenity value is defined in the Act (section 2) as including: "Those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes."
- 8.14. I agree with the applicant's assessment of the effects on visual amenity. The change from open to densely populated is openly visible and existing views, in particular from public space (Lincoln Rolleston Road) and adjacent lifestyle properties are affected.
- 8.15. The applicant suggests the use of open-style fencing as a mitigation measure at the interface with adjacent land to retain some of the views and open character. I consider that open-style fencing only to be an interim solution during the time that the adjacent land to the West and South remains rural.
- 8.16. An open-style fence along Lincoln Rolleston Road could compliment the character of the site, allow for an active public/private interface and provide visual relief along this boundary. I consider this matter to be best addressed at subdivision level. The District Plan's matters for discretion to this effect include rules in regards to fencing along front facades (4.13.1) and at the interface with road boundaries (12.1.4.47). In addition a landscape covenant, as used within the adjacent Falcons Landing subdivision, can assist in retaining views and outlook to and from public space.
- 8.17. The identity of a place connected with the receiving environment is an important quality that contributes to the amenity of the place. Part of the on-site environment of the proposal and contributing to its overall amenity is the existing vegetation, sense of open space, and an open-drain water race and pond area. These natural features provide a point of difference to the site.
- 8.18. Policy B4.1.1.11 encourages new residential areas to be designed to maintain or enhance the aesthetic values of the township, by retaining existing features on site. Policy B4.2.4 mentions OPDs as a method at subdivision level.
- 8.19. I consider the water race, which runs east-west along the southern boundary and feeds into a pond area on site a strong feature of this site.
- 8.20. I disagree with the statement made in section 1 of the assessment that there are no existing waterways within the block. The existing landscape includes a man-made, low-flowing water race which runs along the southern boundary of the and partly feeds into a pond area on site (see Appendix 2). I have been onsite with Council's water engineer to confirm the alignment and have also spoken to the landowner in regards to the historic origins of water races in general and this water race in particular.
- 8.21. Water races have been identified as one of the oldest heritage features in the District and as such are part of the Selwyn character. Water races can also add visual amenity to a neighbourhood, if upgraded and visually incorporated into a reserve, which has successfully been demonstrated in the District (e.g. Faringdon, Stonebrook, Wilfield). The Council's Open Space and Strategy manager Mark Rykers supports an integrated approach, where the water race could be realigned along a road or public reserve corridor.

- 8.22. From speaking to the Council's water engineer Daniel Meehan, the water race is not on Council's closure list, as some landowners downstream still use the race and he would prefer the water race to remain open, rather than being piped.

Mitigation Measures

- 8.23. The landscape assessment (refer to Part 4 page 16) lists six measures (MM1-6) to avoid, remedy or mitigate any potential effects from the Plan Change. The landscape assessment further states on page 10 that *"through mitigation measures, open character and significant landscape components will be retained and enhanced, where possible."*
- 8.24. I agree with the proposed mitigation measures MM2, MM3 and MM4.
- 8.25. I note that while I concur with the intent of MM1, I consider that the provision of only one small cluster of Medium Density housing within the site does not provide sufficient housing choice in keeping with Principle 5 - choice and diversity.
- 8.26. I encourage the applicant to add additional clusters of MD housing that could be developed comprehensively (see 68.and 69.)

9. SUBMISSIONS

- 9.1. I generally support Submitter 0003's suggestion for applying best practice sustainability principles where appropriate, but note that these are best addressed at subdivision level. The District Plan's matters for discretion to this effect include rules in regards to orientation to the sun (4.11.1.8, 12.1.4.30, 12.1.4.7.37), and in regards to walkable blocks (12.1.4.33).
- 9.2. Section orientation, orientation of access and subsequent housing for maximum solar efficiency, suggesting ridgelines to be running east west as suggested by submitter 0003 can be to a degree influenced by roading layout that runs north-south. The proposed ODP provides north-south alignment of roading, which for example results in good solar gain for outdoor living areas. However not all roading can be north-south oriented as this would compromise the ability to achieve walkable blocks (permeability) and connectivity at subdivision stage. I refer to 12.1.4.47 of the District Plan, which lists achieving an average 800m perimeter block as a matter for discretion.
- 9.3. Building covenants sometimes manage reflective surfaces and require lighter roof colours, which are items included in Submission 0003. As mentioned above, this is best addressed at subdivision stage, as the proposed plan change is concerned with providing the framework to guide the future development of land rather than managing the design of any future dwellings.
- 9.4. Given the site characteristics and surrounding environment I do not see the justification for stipulating the reflectivity or colour of built design. Should the applicant wish to address reflectivity this could be done as a private covenant.
- 9.5. Measures to reduce water use and wastewater disposal through rainwater storage and gutter configuration are building specific requirements that are best addressed through the New Zealand Building Code during the building consent process

10. OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ODP)

- 10.1. Policy 6.3.3 (CRPS 2013) provides the framework to guide the preparation an ODP and Policy B4.3.8 of the Plan lists the matters that need to be included within the ODP. The extent to which the proposed PC75 ODP aligns with this guidance is evaluated below.
- 10.2. I note that there are minor discrepancies between the ODP that is part of the plan change request and the one provided within the Landscape/Visual Assessment in Appendix E.

Landuse - Residential

- 10.3. I agree in principal with the rationale for providing MD housing in clusters and applying design principles, such as proximity to services, public green space and transport as relevant criteria, when testing the suitability of a site at subdivision level. The placement of the MD cluster next to the greenspace area and along a primary transport corridor within the PC75 ODP will visually expand the outdoor living space for adjacent smaller units. The proximity to a primary through route containing wider footpaths and carriageways will facilitate walking and cycling and allow to access public transport in the future.
- 10.4. I consider that within the Living Z framework there is an ability for the proposal to provide for (additional) comprehensive medium density housing that allows for a variety of housing typologies that goes beyond the proposals intent to continue the existing single storey detached dwelling typology in the locality (Landscape and Urban Design Assessment, Section 3.2, paragraph 2).
- 10.5. I encourage the applicant to consider providing for a wider variety of densities and optimise the use of the land resource and to support more intensive, affordable housing options. This approach would better meet the needs of the community by changing household compositions and future proofing of our neighbourhoods. In this context I refer to Christchurch City's submission point 002, which requests a minimum net density of 15hh/ha.

Landuse - Commercial

- 10.6. Submission PC75-0007 requests to incorporate a site area of approximately 5500m² as a Neighbourhood Centre Zone (NCZ). Submitter 007 request for a portion of the site to be included as commercial on the proposed ODP. A commercial node in this location has been anticipated by the Rolleston Structure Plan. The District Plan states within Policy B3.4.11 that neighbourhood centres serve a purpose as that to satisfy the more localised and convenience needs of people and communities, whilst complementing Key Activity Centres in the area.
- 10.7. Submitter 0007 has provided 3 options how the commercial site could potentially be developed showing indicative site layouts. All options are located on the intersection of two main transport corridors, which is favourable in terms of accessibility and placement within the overall site. The bulk and height of the proposed built form and the activity itself will be of a scale that can be integrated with the remainder of the residential development. Mitigation measures at the interface between commercial and residential, such as setbacks and landscaping buffers need to be addressed at time of subdivision.
- 10.8. On a preliminary basis the preferred option is a modified version of Option 3.
- 10.9. I agree in principle with the provision of a NCZ in this location, but have to do a more in depth assessment against the provisions of the Plan as part of subdivision consent.
- 10.10. The commercial portion would need to be included and indicatively shown on the proposed Outline Development Plan if the Commissioner grants the relief that is sought by the submitter.

Conclusions

- 10.11. I consider that there are no urban design matters that preclude a NCZ within the general location as proposed by submitter 0007 from being shown on the ODP.

11. TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY

- 11.1. To enhance connectivity and achieve integrate the site with the wider transport network in line with principle 3 of the UD Protocol, I recommend that the north-south orientated secondary road is relocated and aligned to be between the adjoining neighbourhoods to the north and future development to the south (see also figure 7, pg.22 of Transportation Hearing Report).
- 11.2. I note that there is no secondary route proposed within the eastern half of the site, which suggests that this area will be solely reliant on tertiary connections. I consider that the absence of a secondary road in this area could compromise the ability for a legible network for cyclists and pedestrians being achieved in the future. I support the Council's transport expert's recommendation that the secondary east-west link on the ODP is extended to Lincoln Rolleston Road (see also figure 7, pg.22 of Transportation Hearing Report- Appendix 3). This amendment will improve the overall walkability and accessibility of the block.
- 11.3. I appreciate the applicant's intent to provide a network that provides multi modal options and reduce car dependency. In this context the applicant also refers to off-road pedestrian and cycle paths. The ODP indicates two off-road paths, one north-south and one east-west. However, the ODP within the landscape assessment shows one additional pedestrian/cycle connection to the south.
- 11.4. I recommend the ODP to retain the off-road north-south connection at the boundary with Falcon's Landing, and integrate the east- west connection and the second north-south connection adjacent to proposed PC78 as part of the roading network.
- 11.5. As identified within the visual assessment by the applicant, the greatest effect on outlook will be along Lincoln-Rolleston Road. In this context, I consider that direct access off Lincoln-Rolleston Road is the preferred outcome to achieve an active public private interface between the development, the walking and cycling path that provides a connection between Rolleston and Lincoln and with Lincoln-Rolleston Road itself. Housing fronting Lincoln-Rolleston Road is important to establish an urban environment, which allows accessibility and mobility including a continuation of the cycleway from the north, footpaths and in time a lowered speed limit.
- 11.6. In terms of the reference to the roading network I note that the grey arrow in the ODP refers to a possible future road connection. For consistency with other ODP's in Appendix 38 of the SDP the legend needs to be amended to show a double arrow.

Conclusion - Transport and Mobility

- 11.7. I recommend that the proposed secondary north- south connection is amended to align with the adjoining neighbourhoods to the north (Falcon's Landing) and future development to the south and west (Acland Park via PC78).
- 11.8. I recommend that the secondary east-west connection on the ODP is realigned to ensure consistency with Figure 7 of Councils' Transport experts' evidence.
- 11.9. I recommend the pedestrian and cycle links on the OPP to be amended as per point 82.
- 11.10. I recommend that the ODP legend to show a 'double arrow' referring to a future link.

- 11.11. I recommend that the ODP text indicates that individual sections have direct access onto Lincoln-Rolleston Road and to include a note labelled 'interface treatment' on the ODP plan.

12. GREEN AND BLUE NETWORKS

- 12.1. I consider that the water race running along the southern boundary of the proposed site being a historic feature of note that needs to be further assessed and its east-west alignment shown on the proposed ODP.
- 12.2. I recommend the alignment and design of the water race as an amenity feature.

Conclusion - Green and Blue Networks

- 12.3. For completeness, I consider that the ODP text to include: (a) how the central reserve is linked within the site and with surrounding public recreation and reserve space.; the ODP plan to: (b) illustrate the indicative location of Green links and where they accommodate off-road cycle and pedestrian links; (c) show the water race and include a sentence within the ODP text.
- 12.4. I also recommend the amenity and ecological value of the water race and pond area to be investigated and incorporated as a feature as part of the wider green and blue network.

13. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 13.1. Overall, in respect to the objectives, policies and provisions related to urban design I support the granting of the request on the basis that the recommendations listed below are applied to changes to the ODP.

Outline Development Plan- text amendments

Land use

- 13.2. Include reference to commercial land use and neighbourhood centre.

Transport

- 13.3. Include reference to 'Interface treatment'- to achieve an active frontage and contribute to achieving an accessible and safe urban environment, sections need to be accessed off Lincoln Rolleston Road.

Green and Blue Network

- 13.4. To include a description of how the proposed reserve is linked with the surrounding green network, including reference to combine walking and cycling network with the green and blue network connecting to key destinations (see MM4).
- 13.5. To make reference to existing water race and possible design options.

OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN - Plan amendments

Land use

- 13.6. Show extent of commercial development.

Transport

- 13.7. Shift the proposed secondary north- south connection to align with adjoining neighbourhoods to the North and future development to the South.
- 13.8. Amend Secondary East-West connection on the ODP in line with figure 7 of the Council's transport engineer's hearing report.
- 13.9. Incorporate east-west and north-south pedestrian and cycle links at the interface with PC78 into the overall roading network. Retain north-south off-road connection to Falcon's Landing on the ODP.
- 13.10. Show line along Lincoln Rolleston Road labelled 'interface treatment'
- 13.11. Amend the ODP's key to show a 'double arrow' when referring to a future link.

Green and Blue Network

- 13.12. Show water race alignment



Gabi Wolfer

(27/09/2021)

APPENDIX 1

BEST PRACTISE URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES (CRPS 2013 Policy 6.3.2)

Principle 1-Tūrangawaewae – the sense of place and belonging – recognition and incorporation of the identity of the place, the context and the core elements that comprise the Through context and site analysis, the following elements should be used to reflect the appropriateness of the development to its location: landmarks and features, historic heritage, the character and quality of the existing built and natural environment, historic and cultural markers and local stories.

Principle 2-Integration – recognition of the need for well-integrated places, infrastructure, movement routes and networks, spaces, land uses and the natural and built environment. These elements should be overlaid to provide an appropriate form and pattern of use and development.

Principle 3-Connectivity – the provision of efficient and safe high quality, barrier free, multimodal connections within a development, to surrounding areas, and to local facilities and services, with emphasis at a local level placed on walking, cycling and public transport as more sustainable forms of transport.

Principle 4-Safety – recognition and incorporation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in the layout and design of developments, networks and spaces to ensure safe, comfortable and attractive places.

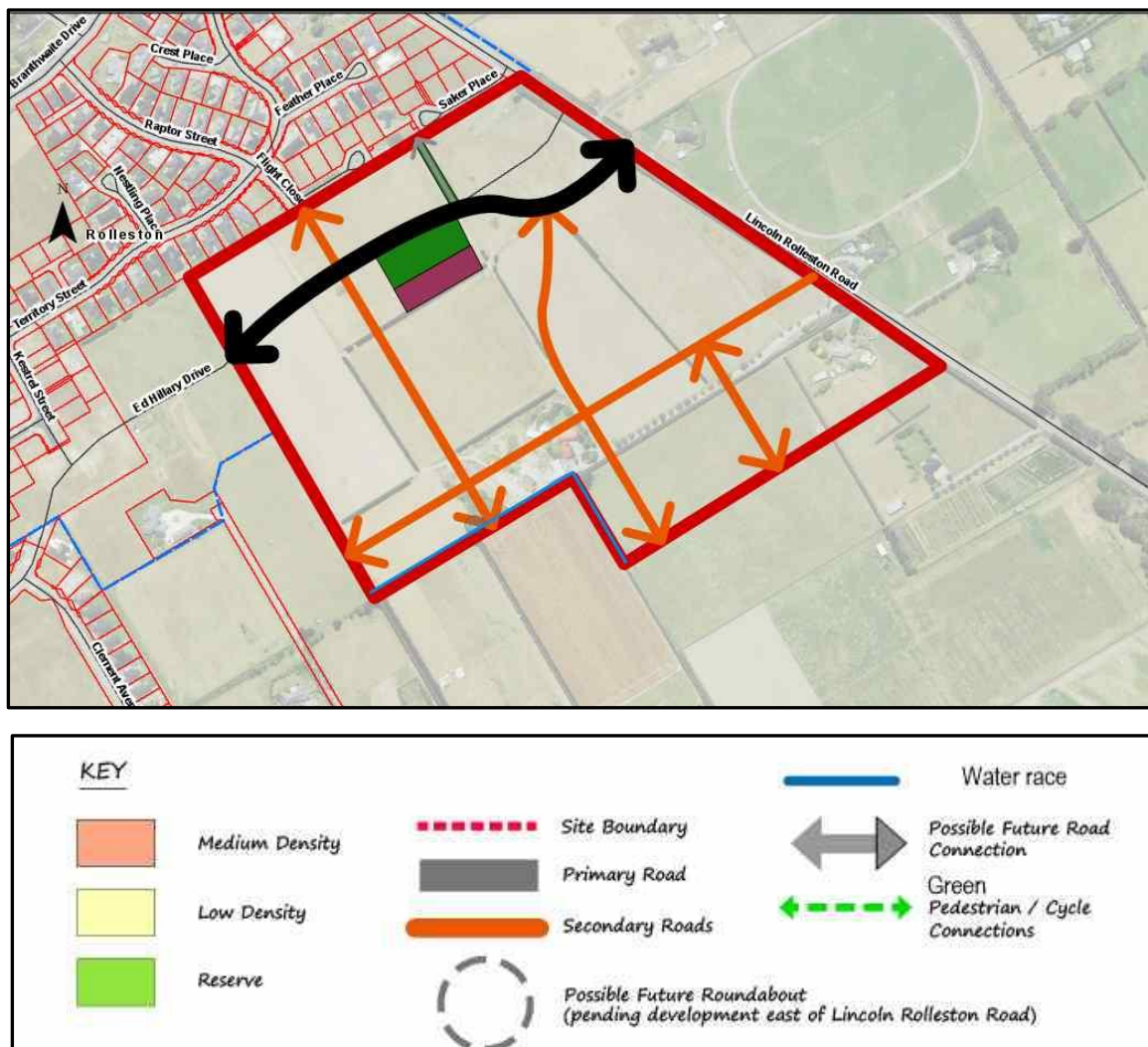
Principle 5-Choice and diversity – ensuring developments provide choice and diversity in their layout, built form, land use housing type and density, to adapt to the changing needs and circumstances of the population.

Principle 6-Environmentally sustainable design – ensuring that the process of design and development minimises water and resource use, restores ecosystems, safeguards mauri and maximises passive solar gain.

Principle 7-Creativity and innovation – supporting opportunities for exemplar approaches to infrastructure and urban form to lift the benchmark in the development of new urban areas in the Christchurch region.

APPENDIX 2

PROPOSED CHANGES TO ODP



PICTURES OF WATER RACE AND POND ON SITE

