

EVIDENCE IN THE MATTER OF PC 76

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, the submissions and the RFI response on the matters of Urban Design 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 applicant's private plan change request report with ('request'), Appendix 2- the updated Urban Design, Landscape and Visual Assessment ('UD statement') and Appendix 3- Updated Outline Development Plan and supporting text ('ODP' and 'ODP text').

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 - 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**) (non-statutory) of the 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 Private Plan change 76 requests the rezoning of approximately 12.9 hectares of Rural (Inner Plains) zoned land to Living Z, for residential purposes. The site is situated at 605, 617 and 627 East Maddisons Road in Rolleston. The proposed land use is a mixture of Medium and Low Density housing. The proposal seeks to meet a target density rate of 12hh/ha, achieving 155 sections. An Outline Development Plan (ODP) illustrating the proposed changes is part of this proposal. The ODP indicates a single centrally located reserve area.

6. SUBMISSIONS

- 6.1. Council received six submissions, of which two have been considered relevant to urban design and thus addressed within this report (see section 12.)

7. CONTEXT

- 7.1. I am a local resident and have a good understanding of the site in the context of the overall township.
- 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 environment; and (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 integrates well with the surrounding environment and will be visually perceived as an extension to the existing residential subdivision (Olive Fields) to the north, which is of a similar scale and density. To the east, residential development occurs on larger parcels of approximately 4,000m². The proposed site and sites adjoining to the 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 and proposed residential activities to the south and west, should the request for PC70 be granted, effectively enclosing the site on all sides with residential development.
- 7.5. I conclude that the site assessed within context does not trigger any apparent conflict with surrounding sites and their activities and I do not consider that there will be any negative aspects from existing activities in the immediate surrounds on the proposed residential amenity of the site.

8. URBAN DESIGN MATTERS

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

9. URBAN FORM

- 9.1. The site is within the study area of the 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. Both documents identify the site as a future development area (FDA). Policy B4.3.3 of the Selwyn Operative District Plan states that zoning patterns should avoid leaving a patch of land zoned rural surrounded by

Living zones. The proposal, as well as proposed development to the south and west of the site (PC70), is consistent with this policy.

- 9.2. The site is physically contained to the north by existing residential development and to the east by East Maddisons Road.
- 9.3. 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 south- west Rolleston in a planned and coherent manner.
- 9.4. 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.

10. AMENITY, CHARACTER AND OUTLOOK

- 10.1. Existing residential development to the north (Olive Fields), proposed future residential development adjoining the site (PC 70- Faringdon Far West) to the west and south and future infill development within Living Z zoned land across East Maddisons Road to the east (ODP Area 10), as well as PC 64 and 73 in the vicinity, are cumulatively having an impact on the character and outlook of the site.
- 10.2. Part of the existing natural characteristics of the site, (and adjoining sites to the west and south) 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.
- 10.3. The physical site characteristics to the north can be summarised as being suburban, with predominantly single-storey standalone housing on low density sections.
- 10.4. The site itself (and adjacent sites to the west and south) 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. Sites to the east, while zoned residential, have also some rural –residential characteristics, but being deep and narrow appear to be denser in nature in comparison to the proposed site. This particular site configuration is a remnant of these sites to the east being formally a pine plantation.
- 10.5. The proposal will alter the site to be aligned with the residential suburban character to the North.
- 10.6. I support the amount and distribution of density on the proposed ODP, which ensures that lower density sites are used at the perimeter to adjacent sites to mitigate some of the effects of the proposal on the receiving environment.
- 10.7. I disagree with the applicant's assessment that states the absence of strong natural or physical features on site (UD assessment- page 15).
- 10.8. I consider that 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 and contributing to its overall amenity is the existing vegetation, sense of open space, clusters and rows of established trees and an open-drain water race. These natural features provide a point of difference to the site.
- 10.9. Amenity values is defined in the RMA (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."

- 10.10. The existing site characteristics are representative of lifestyle block properties on the Plains in the Selwyn District. These characteristics include and contain a low ratio of built form to land, well set apart buildings and structures, surrounded by established gardens and set within open fields framed by tall shelterbelt plantings.
- 10.11. I support the retention of some existing dwellings, as suggested by the applicant (page 13-UD assessment) with their larger established garden plantings to keep some open character and to balance proposed smaller medium density sites.
- 10.12. 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.
- 10.13. I support the applicant's mitigation measure to retain established trees to ensure an open character with a high level amenity (see MM2). I consider that mature trees have value in providing some vertical aspect to the otherwise flat topography. Being well-established they can add privacy and shade. Council's Open Space and Strategy Manager Mark Rykers has undertaken a site visit and has advised that some ornamental trees could be integrated into the road frontage or reserve opposite the proposed recreation reserve.
- 10.14. I consider the water race, which runs parallel to East Maddisons Road before turning west and then further south along the western boundary to the adjacent site where it feeds into a pond area on adjacent site, to be a strong feature of this site.
- 10.15. Water races have been identified as one of the oldest heritage features in the District and as such are part of the Selwyn character, even in urban areas. Water races can also add visual amenity to a neighbourhood, if upgraded and visually incorporated into a reserve. Mr Ryker's supports an integrated approach, where the water race could be realigned along a road or public reserve corridor. This has particular merit in terms of retaining some of the site's rural- residential character.
- 10.16. I have consulted with the Council's Surface Water Engineer Daniel Meehan, who has confirmed that the water race is not on Council's closure list, as one landowner downstream still uses the race.
- 10.17. I consider that piping the water race, as suggested in the request, as a continuation of the subdivision to the north is a lost opportunity of adding value to the site and public space, which has been successfully demonstrated elsewhere in the District (Faringdon, Westfield, Stonebrook subdivisions).
- 10.18. Other effects of the proposal include loss of outlook for neighbouring properties and when viewed from public space (East Maddisons and Goulds Roads). I consider these to be anticipated within the gradual transition from rural to residential.

11. MITIGATION MEASURES

- 11.1. The UD assessment lists nine mitigation measures (MM1-9) to avoid, remedy or mitigate any potential effects on landscape character, landscape values and /or visual amenity from the proposed Plan Change.
- 11.2. I agree with mitigation measures MM1-4, MM7 and MM8.
- 11.3. While I agree with the intent of MM5, I consider that fencing can be adequately addressed at subdivision level, in accordance with the fencing standards contained within the Operative District Plan. Rule 4.17, which addresses fencing along public reserves within Living Z zones and achieves a balance between privacy and safety matters between private backyards and public open space.

- 11.4. As PC 70 is proposed to the west and south, and that there are existing approved resource consents for residential development on adjacent sites to the west, I do not consider that rural fencing and screen planting, as proposed in MM6, is an appropriate long-term solution at the interface of urbanised residential development, as suggested by the applicant.
- 11.5. In response to MM9 I consider that while the views will change with the removal of tall shelterbelts, the benefits from alternative views will be to residential, rather than rural properties as stated by the applicant, given that surrounding sites are either part of a rezoning process or are zoned residential already.

12. SUBMISSIONS

- 12.1. Submitter PC76-0002 requests that no additional roading connections beyond the indicative road on the ODP to be provided to East Maddison Road.
- 12.2. I consider that at least one additional roading connection off East Maddisons Road may be appropriate to encourage pedestrian, cycle and vehicular permeability through and within the site, ease access to surrounding community facilities, provide another choice of route and overall achieve a network of walkable blocks that are in accordance with Policy 4.2.10 of the Plan.
- 12.3. I consider that a well-connected neighbourhood strategic network needs to be established and secured at the ODP level. I support Mr Collins, who has provided transport evidence on behalf of the Council, and his request for an additional connection, the exact location of which should be determined through subdivision process.
- 12.4. Submitter PC76-0005 request the plan change to be amended to include the recommendations of the Greater Christchurch Partnership Social and Affordable Housing Report.
- 12.5. The actions from the report are around engagement, policy, and planning responses. The Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan aims to better understand potential affordability issues and social housing demand and outlines a range of potential responses.
- 12.6. Discussions with Council's Policy Analyst Mr Baird confirm that the implications of the report on the Future Development Areas is yet to be discussed, as the stated Action Plan is currently in development. The report has not been approved by the Greater Christchurch Partnership and therefore cannot be considered as part of the private plan change process.

13. OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ODP)

- 13.1. 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 PC76 ODP aligns with this guidance is evaluated below.
- 13.2. I note that the applicant hasn't provided any text to support the content shown on the proposed Outline Development Plan. I would encourage the applicant to consider adding explanatory text to avoid interpretation issues and provide some rationale to the intended outcome. This includes the matters set out in CRPS Policy 6.3.2 that are appropriate to this plan change request.

Land use- Residential

- 13.3. I agree in principal with the rationale for providing medium density (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 for MD at subdivision level.

- 13.4. I agree in general with the spatial distribution of the MD housing next to the central greenspace area and along a primary transport corridor within the PC76 ODP, which will visually expand the outdoor living space for adjacent smaller units. The proximity to a primary through route containing wider footpaths and carriageways will also facilitate walking and cycling and promote access to public transport in the future.
- 13.5. I do however recommend the removal of the MD cluster that is placed immediately to the northern boundary and consider low density is a more appropriate response to continue the principle of a low-density perimeter buffer at the interface with neighbouring developments.
- 13.6. I encourage the applicant to consider providing for a variety of densities and an efficient use of the physical land resource to support more intensive, affordable developments. This approach would be a supported response to changing household compositions and future proofing of our neighbourhoods. In this context I refer to Christchurch City's submission point 002 and ECAN submission point 001, which request a minimum net density of 15hh/ha.

Conclusion/Recommended Changes to ODP:

- 13.7. I recommend the ODP is amended to illustrate Low Density zoning along all boundaries, including internal boundaries with existing residential land uses.

Transport and Mobility

- 13.8. In terms of the display of the roading network I note that all roading is referred to as 'indicative roads'. To be in keeping with other ODPs in the District Plan and to establish a hierarchy within the proposed transport network I recommend the ODP illustrates primary and secondary routes and their different functions be addressed within supporting ODP text.
- 13.9. To support connectivity and provide multi modal options I recommend the addition for two additional off-road pedestrian/cycle connections to PC70 and for them to be labelled on the ODP. One connection is to be provided on the western boundary, the other to provide connectivity to the south.
- 13.10. As identified within the UD assessment, the greatest effect on outlook will be along East Maddisons Road. In this context, I consider that direct access off East Maddisons Road is the preferred outcome to achieve an active public private interface between the development and East Maddisons Road. Housing fronting East Maddisons Road is important to establish an urban environment, which allows accessibility and mobility including a continuation of the footpath from the north and in time a lowered speed limit.

Conclusion/Recommended Changes to ODP:

- 13.11. I support the Council's transport engineer and his proposed amendments in his evidence (see figure 5, page 17);
- 13.12. I recommend the ODP is amended as follows (see **Appendix 2**):
- That the reference to 'indicative roading' is replaced with 'primary route' and corresponding text included as appropriate;
 - That the north-south connection is identified as 'primary route';
 - That the east-west connection is also identified as a 'primary route'; I support the realignment of the primary east-west connection as recommended by Mr Collins;

- That a 'secondary' route to East Maddisons Road is identified;
- That two additional pedestrian/cycle links are identified and that these are also incorporated into the green network;
- That the ODP legend is amended to illustrate a 'double arrow' referring to a future link.

Green and Blue Networks

13.13. To ensure an accessible and well-integrated development with surrounding sites I consider that there needs to be additional links provided. These green links provide the basis for the proposed pedestrian and cycle links recommended above.

13.14. I encourage the applicant to retain established trees, where appropriate, to foster a complimentary, yet unique character.

13.15. I consider that the water race running through the proposed site is a historic feature of note and that this should be identified as an amenity feature and its alignment shown on the ODP.

Conclusion/Recommended Changes to ODP:

13.16. I recommend that the amenity and ecological value of the water race is investigated and incorporated as a feature as part of the wider green and blue network;

13.17. I recommend the ODP is amended as follows:

- That the indicative location of green links are shown, and where they accommodate off-road cycle and pedestrian links;
- That the water race is shown;
- That text be included that indicates how the central reserve is linked within the site and with surrounding public recreation and reserve space and how the water race may be addressed.

14. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

14.1. Overall, I support the proposed rezoning of rural land to Living Z, subject to the following:

Outline Development Plan — text amendments

Transport

14.2. Make reference to 'interface treatment' along East Maddisons Road to achieve an active frontage and contribute to an accessible and safe urban environment.

Green and Blue Network

14.3. 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 (e.g. Foster Park);

14.4. Make reference to existing water race and possible design options;

Outline Development Plan – plan amendments (See Appendix 2)

Land Use

14.5. Replace cluster of Medium Density with Low density at the northern boundary;

Transport

14.6. Replace 'indicative roading' and identify the north-south connection as a 'primary route';

14.7. Replace 'indicative roading' and identify the east-west connection as a 'primary route'. Realign this primary east-west connection as suggested by the Council's transport engineer (see his evidence figure 5, page 17);

14.8. Retain a 'secondary' route to East Maddisons Road;

14.9. Add one pedestrian/cycle link to the west;

14.10. Add one pedestrian/cycle link to the south;

14.11. Amend the ODP's key to show a 'double arrow' referring to a future (roading) link outside the proposed ODP boundary;

14.12. Add note 'Interface treatment' along the East Maddisons Road frontage;

Green and Blue Network

14.13. Show water race alignment.



Gabi Wolfer

(05/10/2021)

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- PC76

