

**SELWYN PLANTATION BOARD LIMITED
PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE REQUEST – HOLMES BLOCK**

**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT
REPORT**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	Page 3
THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT	Page 4
Landscape character	Page 4
Landscape values.....	Page 6
THE PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE.....	Page 8
RELEVANT STATUTORY DOCUMENTS.....	Page 9
The Resource Management Act 1991.....	Page 9
The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement.....	Page 10
Proposed Change 1 to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement.....	Page 10
The Selwyn District Plan.....	Page 11
The Selwyn District Council Rural-Residential Background Report.....	Page 12
THE LANDSCAPE AND AMENITY RELATED EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE.....	Page 13
External effects.....	Page 14
State Highway 1.....	Page 14
Dunns Crossing Road.....	Page 15
Burnham School Road.....	Page 17
Users of relevant public places or facilities.....	Page 19
Neighbours, including future occupiers of adjacent areas zoned for development.....	Page 20
Summary regarding external effects.....	Page 24
Internal Effects.....	Page 25
The outline development plan.....	Page 25
Proposed provisions that relate to design methods and techniques.....	Page 26
The type of amenity and landscape experience will be provided within the site by the proposed Plan Change.....	Page 27
CONCLUSIONS.....	Page 29
Summary of effects of the proposed Plan Change.....	Page 29
External effects.....	Page 29
Internal effects.....	Page 30
The effects of the proposed Plan Change in relation to the relevant statutory documents.....	Page 31
The Selwyn District Council Rural Residential Background Report.....	Page 31
The Selwyn District Plan.....	Page 32
The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement and Proposed Change 1.....	Page 33
The Resource Management Act 1991.....	Page 34
Overall conclusion.....	Page 34

INTRODUCTION

- 1 The Selwyn Plantation Board Limited (SPBL) request a Private Plan Change in relation to an area of land adjacent to Rolleston known as the Holmes Block (the site). I have been engaged to assess and report on the effects of the proposed Plan Change that relate to landscape and amenity issues.
- 2 The details of the proposed Plan Change are set out in the Private Plan Change Request document that has been prepared by Aurecon. In summary, the proposed Plan Change seeks the rezoning of the site from Rural - Outer Plains Zone to Living 3 Zone. The proposal incorporates a requirement for all development of the site to be in accordance with an Outline Development Plan (ODP) that is appended to the Aurecon document.
- 3 The intention of the proposed zoning is to provide for rural residential development. The result of the ODP and the various planning mechanisms that are incorporated into the proposed Plan Change is that a specific type and configuration of rural residential development will be provided for.
- 4 It is relevant to note that SPBL also propose a similar Plan Change for a nearby area of land known as the Skellerup Block for which I have also prepared a landscape and visual effects assessment report. While I have prepared the two reports as separate documents that can be read independently of each other, there is necessarily a high degree of repetition between them, particularly in terms of the sections that describe the existing environment, the relevant statutory documents, etc.
- 5 Additionally, a visual and landscape assessment report relating to a previous configuration of the proposed Plan Change was prepared by Harrison Grierson Consultants Limited, dated 6 April 2009 (attached as **Appendix 1**). That report (although commenting on a different development configuration) set out information relating to the character of the site, its context and recommended design elements that I am in full agreement with, and hence there is some repetition of parts of that report here.
- 6 Following consultation with the Selwyn District Council, the proposal has been amended and plans describing a new configuration have been prepared by Harrison Grierson. The new

plans dated 20 January 2010 are discussed in this report and form the basis of my landscape and visual effects assessment.

THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

Landscape Character

- 7 At a very broad scale, the site occupies a relatively central position in the Canterbury Plains, being the vast area of deposited alluvial geomorphology used for relatively intensive grazing and cropping that connects the Southern Alps to Bank's Peninsula. The finer scale context of the site can be seen on Figure 1, below.
- 8 The northern side of the site adjoins State Highway 1 (SH1). The eastern side of the site is defined by Dunns Crossing Road, which also forms the western extent of the Rolleston Urban Limits, as defined by existing Living 2A zoning and by the urban limits set out in Variation 1 to Proposed Change 1 to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement. The Rolleston Resource Recovery Park occupies a block of land to the immediate south-west of the site, while a large area of land to the immediate west and south-west of the site is proposed to accommodate a potential expansion of the Rolleston Wastewater Treatment Plant. It is my understanding that the built part of the expanded Wastewater Treatment Plant is likely to be located to the south of Burnham School Road, while the land to the west of the subject site is to be used for dispersal of wastewater via irrigation.
- 9 Apart from the urban and infrastructural land uses set out above, the vicinity of the site is generally used for agricultural purposes, particularly grazing. The flat topography is generally covered in verdant pasture, divided into relatively small rectangular paddocks by traditional post-and wire fences. Lines of coniferous shelter tree species in varying states of maturity are common. A scattering of rural residences roughly follow Brookside Road to the south of the site. The corridor of SH1 creates a strong visual boundary through the landscape that coincides with the site's northern boundary.
- 10 The site itself has been used for forestry until relatively recently. It is currently used for stock grazing, similar to surrounding land, and is crossed (in a south-east to north-west direction) by a number of juvenile pine shelterbelts. Similarly, hedgerows or shelterbelts follow parts of the site's boundaries. No buildings exist on the site. Similar to the surrounding vicinity, the site

has an open character, although due to the particularly flat topography, views are often short, limited by tree planting, and no elevated or overview visibility is available.



Figure 1: The immediate context of the proposed Plan Change site. The Preliminary Subdivision and Landscape Plan has been overlaid onto the site.

- 11 In an overall sense, the landscape character of the site and its vicinity is that of a working, rural landscape, typical of the Canterbury Plains. However, the immediate adjacency to Rolleston and the presence of elements such as Rolleston Resource Recovery Park and Wastewater Treatment Plant add a peri-urban aspect to the vicinity's character.

- 12 Under the Selwyn District Plan, the permitted baseline that relates to the site is such that typical rural activities may be expected on the site in the absence of the proposed Plan Change. Dwellings are provided for at a density of one per 20 hectares, which would allow 4 within the site itself.



Photograph 1: 180° panorama looking north from Burnham School Road adjacent to the entrance to the Resource Recovery Park. (Enlarged versions of all photographs are appended to this report as **Appendix 5**).

Landscape values

- 13 I have conducted no specific study into the community held values that are associated with the site or its vicinity, however, guidance can be taken from some of the relevant statutory documents.
- 14 The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement contains no spatially specific descriptions of landscape values but it refers to the Canterbury Regional Landscape Study¹. The Canterbury Regional Landscape Study categorises the area of the proposed Plan Change as being within the Lower Plains Land Type. It makes the following statements regarding landscape values and naturalness:

“To many New Zealanders the Plains landscape is the very essence of Canterbury. The contrast between the unmodified ‘natural’ hills and the manicured patchwork quilt of the plains has been recognised as distinctive through literature, art and visitor data”².

“Because of the lack of landform variety, it is the landcover and land use patterns that dominate the character of the Plains. The landscape is perceived as un-natural apart from its soils, the limited remnant natural features such as wetlands, forest, shrubland, and grassland pockets, and the braided rivers, The latter are the most important natural feature. Viewed

¹ Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, Part 20.4(1).

² Canterbury Regional Landscape Study, Volume 1, prepared for the Canterbury Regional Council, Boffa Miskell Limited and Lucas Associates, October 1993, page 39.

*from higher ground or from the air the Plains are certainly expressive of their formation but at a scale not readily experienced at ground level. An elevated vantage point is best from which to experience the subtlety of the natural soil and drainage patterns that occur across much of the landscape. The developed Plains are very important to the region's landscape image, however their lack of naturalness suggests that they do not meet the criteria of S6(b)*³

15 The Canterbury Regional Landscape Study is currently undergoing a review, but it is my understanding that the findings of the review do not significantly alter the above findings.

16 Part B1.4 of Volume 2 of the Selwyn District Plan also discusses landscapes and values held by the community in relation to them. Its method of identifying outstanding natural landscapes is described in the following way:

*“A ‘shared values’ approach was adopted. The Council consulted with residents, landowners, occupiers, tāngata whenua and interest groups about any areas or natural features which they considered to be outstanding in each geomorphic area. The participants then identified activities which they thought had effects which were appropriate and inappropriate within these outstanding areas or natural features. The discussions were facilitated by a professional landscape architect, and form the basis of the policies and rules in this plan. Throughout this process the Canterbury Plains were identified as special, but did not meet the rigorous test that section 6(b) requires when determining landscapes are ‘outstanding’”*⁴.

17 Part B1.4 goes on to discuss the outstanding natural landscapes and features of the district in turn and some specific Policies and Objectives relate to them. These are also identified on the relevant planning maps. The subject site is not contained within any identified outstanding natural landscape or feature. The part of the Canterbury Plains that lie between Christchurch City and a line extending from West Melton to Tai Tapu (an area that does not include the subject site) is identified as providing a significant rural landscape in contrast with the urban landscape of the city⁵.

18 I consider that it can be fairly concluded that the vicinity of the proposed Plan Change is valued by the community in that it is part of (albeit a very small part of) the Canterbury Plains, which are distinctive and important to the region's landscape identity, but which fall short of

³ Ibid, page 40.

⁴ Selwyn District Plan, Volume 2, Part B1.4, page B1-034.

⁵ Ibid, Part B1.4.12.

being outstanding. The way in which the specific area of the Plan Change is valued must also be tempered by its relatively high degree of modification (when compared to other parts of the Canterbury Plains) and by its immediate adjacency to Rolleston's urban area.

THE PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE

- 19 I have examined the information and plans that make up the proposed Plan Change. In this report I will not set out a detailed examination of all of the various plan provisions and mechanisms that are proposed to direct the changes to the landscape that the proposed Plan Change will bring, rather I will make the assumption that the landscape will change in the way set out by the Outline Development Plan (ODP) attached as **Appendix 2**. It is my understanding that any development or landscape change that is not in accordance with the ODP would require at least a discretionary activity resource consent.
- 20 In broad terms, landscape change that would be enabled by the ODP would change the site from paddock land into a type of rural residential land use. 126 private allotments would be provided for, ranging between 4000m² and 1.5ha in area. In addition, the site would be bisected by corridors of "Countryside Areas", of at least 50 metres width, which link to the surrounding landscape and are to be managed in productive rural use. A rectilinear roading circuit would link to Dunns Crossing Road and Burnham School Road and would provide for public access through the site. Pedestrian links are also proposed as are stands of street tree planting and the installation/retention shelterbelt trees.
- 21 In addition to the above features, the proposed Plan Change includes a suite of provisions that would have the effect of restricting the specific way in which each lot could be developed. These restrictions relate to such things as:
- The treatment of road corridors in relation to footpaths, drainage swales, lighting, etc,
 - A minimum amount of landscape planting to be undertaken on each lot and the requirement to submit a planting design for Council approval,
 - A maximum amount of allowable paving,
 - The style, height and amount of fencing that is permissible,

- The amount of the road frontage of any lot permitted to consist of paving,
 - The treatment of the interface with SH1,
 - The amount of any allotment permitted to be covered by buildings,
 - Setbacks of buildings from boundaries,
- 22 The general layout of development that the proposed Plan Change would enable can be seen on the ODP. Essentially the change from paddocks to this development pattern is what I have assessed in terms of effects on amenity and landscape appreciation.

RELEVANT STATUTORY DOCUMENTS

- 23 The following statutory documents are relevant to the consideration of the landscape and amenity related effects of the proposed Plan Change:
- The Resource Management Act 1991 (the RMA),
 - The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement
 - Proposed Change 1 to The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement
 - The Selwyn District Plan
 - The Selwyn District Council Rural Residential Background Report
- 24 In this section I will briefly discuss the guidance that these documents lend to an assessment of the landscape effects of the proposed Plan Change. Following my assessment of effects of the proposed Plan Change, in the next section of my report, I will then discuss the consistency of the proposed Plan Change with these documents in my conclusion.

The Resource Management Act 1991

- 25 Matters from Part II of the RMA that are relevant to the assessment of landscape and amenity effects of development are found in Section 5 (purpose), Section 6 (matters of national importance), and Section 7 (other matters). The regional and district level statutory documents, of course, take full account of the relevant parts of the RMA.

The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement

- 26 The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS) provides the foundation for the development of regional and district plans and deals with landscape matters in Section 8 of its Part 2. The Objectives of this section seek some protection for wetlands, biodiversity and ecological systems, historical and cultural heritage, and natural landscapes and features that contribute to Canterbury's distinctive character. In relation to this last point, the relevant Policies refer to landscapes and features that meet the criteria of sub-chapter 20.4(1) of the CRPS. I note that the site does not meet these criteria, i.e. it is not part of a landscape of regional significance.

Proposed Change 1 to The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement

- 27 Proposed Change 1 to the CRPS is a broad ranging change that seeks to manage and provide for residential growth in the Canterbury region. It has been prompted by some aspects of the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy and provides for rural residential development as one means of accommodating residential growth in the region. A decision on Proposed Change 1 has been issued but is subject to appeal.
- 28 Proposed Change 1 provides for rural residential development, which it defines as "residential units outside the Urban Limits at an average density of no less than one per hectare"⁶. Policy 14 of Proposed Change 1 relates to rural residential development and sets out a list of methods that rural residential development should accord with⁷. Most of these methods are unrelated to landscape matters and do not give guidance to an assessment of landscape and amenity related effects, however the following methods are of some relevance:

(iv) The location of any proposed Rural Residential development shall:

- Not give rise to significant reverse sensitivity effects with adjacent rural activities, including quarrying and agricultural research farms, or strategic infrastructure;
- where adjacent to or in close proximity to an existing urban or rural residential area, be able to be integrated into or consolidated with the existing settlement.

⁶ Regional Policy Statement, Council decisions on submissions and further submissions: Proposed Change 1, Volume 2 of 4, page 33.

⁷ Ibid, page 26.

- Avoid significant adverse ecological effects;
- (v) An Outline Development Plan is prepared which sets out an integrated design for subdivision and land use, and provides for the long-term maintenance of rural residential character.⁸

The Selwyn District Plan

- 29 The proposed Plan Change seeks to insert a new zone into the Selwyn District Plan and to rezone the site. Effectively, the site will be removed from the Rural Zone and will become a part of the district's supply of Living Zones. However, the Living 3 Zone is intended to provide a living environment that is distinct from that of the other Living Zones; a high amenity rural residential type of living environment that sits amongst rural land uses. As discussed previously, the new area of zoning will have the effect of enabling development that is consistent with the proffered ODP.
- 30 The Selwyn District Plan (SDP) contains a number of Objectives and Policies regarding landscape and amenity matters throughout the district that any new area of zoning should be consistent with. These are found within both the Rural and Township volumes of the SDP.
- 31 The land that surrounds the subject site is generally part of the Rural Zone (ie Inner Plains or Outer Plains). Volume 2 of the SDP includes a number of Objectives and Policies that generally have the purpose of appropriately protecting the landscape and amenity values of the Rural Zone. It is important that the proposed new Living 3 Zone does not stymie these Policies and Objectives as they relate to the land surrounding the site. The relevant Objectives and Policies are:
- Objectives B3.4.1 and B 3.4.2 relating to the quality of the environment; and
 - associated Policies B3.4.1, B3.4.3, B3.4.18 and B 3.4.19.
- 32 Volume 1 of the SDP deals with the Business Zones and Living Zones of the district. This volume also contains Objectives and Policies regarding landscape and amenity matters that any new area of living zoning should be consistent with. These are:

⁸ Ibid, pages 26 and 17.

- Objectives B1.4.1 and B 1.4.4 relating to outstanding natural features and landscapes (and the contradictory and confusing preamble that states that the Canterbury Plains are an outstanding natural feature⁹);
- Associated Policies B1.4.15 and B1.4.16;
- Objectives B3.4.1, B3.4.2 and B3.4.3 relating to the quality of the environment;
- Associated Policy B3.4.3;
- Objectives B4.1.1 and B4.1.2 relating to residential density;
- Associated Policies 4.1.3, 4.1.10, 4.1.11 and 4.1.12,
- Objectives 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 relating to residential and business development.

The Selwyn District Council Rural Residential Background Report

- 33 The SDC is in the early stages of formulating a Plan Change (known as Plan Change 17) to provide for rural residential development within the district. In part, the SDC's investigation of a Plan Change of this sort has been motivated by Environment Canterbury's Proposed Change 1 to the Regional Policy Statement, which seeks to allocate residential growth capacity (including rural residential growth) within the Greater Christchurch area.
- 34 To that end, the SDC have produced a Rural Residential Background Report dated December 2009 (the background report) that investigates ways in which rural residential development might best be provided for within the district.
- 35 I note that the background report has no statutory weight and that it is labelled as a "draft for consultation". Notwithstanding this, I believe it is valuable and relevant to an assessment of the proposed Plan Change since it represents a comprehensive appraisal of issues relating to the provision of rural residential development within the district and sets out what rural residential development should appropriately achieve in terms of amenity.
- 36 The draft report is comprehensively laid out in 6 sections. Essentially, the first two sections provide background information regarding Plan Change 17. Section 3 generally sets out what

⁹ Selwyn District Plan, Volume 1, Part B1.4, page B1-032.

Plan Change 17 seeks to achieve and then Section 4 sets out the principles regarding rural residential development that will guide Plan Change 17. These principles cover the issues of landscape values, spatial constraints and opportunities for rural residential development, and infrastructure servicing.

- 37 Section 5 then discusses each of the townships within the relevant part of the Selwyn District (including Rolleston) and sets out opportunities and constraints regarding the ability to locate rural residential development in the vicinity of each township.
- 38 Section 6 “outlines draft criteria for selecting preferred locations for rural-residential development in the UDS Area of the Selwyn District”¹⁰. In fact, this section summarises many of the findings from the main body of the draft report.
- 39 In terms of what type of rural-residential development PC17 will provide for (and by inference, what type of rural residential development the SDC sees as appropriate) the most relevant parts of the background report are;
- The lists of criteria in Section 6.
 - The desirable landscape/amenity outcomes of rural-residential development listed in paragraph 4.4 (partially repeated/summarised in Section 6).
 - The list of characteristics of suitable rural residential development in paragraph 4.6 (partially repeated/summarised in Section 6).
 - The spatial constraints to rural residential development listed in paragraph 4.11 and shown graphically in Appendix 6.
 - The spatial constraints to rural residential development in the Rolleston vicinity that are set out in paragraphs 5.26 to 5.42 (partially repeated/summarised in Section 6).

THE LANDSCAPE AND AMENITY RELATED EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE

- 40 As discussed in very broad terms above, the actual change to the character of the land that the proposed Plan Change will bring about is to effectively change the site from paddocks into a development pattern as directed by the submitted ODP. This change will have implications

¹⁰ Selwyn District Council – Draft Rural-Residential Background Report, paragraph 6.1.

for the way in which the landscape is perceived and appreciated. The creation of the development that the proposed Plan Change would enable will have landscape and amenity related effects for observers outside the site itself, i.e. neighbours, travellers on adjacent roads, users of adjacent public places, etc. The development will also create a certain type of amenity and landscape character for observers within the site itself, i.e. future occupants, users and visitors. I will give my findings on both of these issues in this section of the report.

- 41 For ease of reference, I attach copies of the “Preliminary Subdivision and Landscape Plan” and the “Preliminary Subdivision and Landscape Plan – Rendered version” prepared by Harrison Grierson that form part of the proposed Plan Change documentation to this report as **Appendices 3 and 4**. It will be useful to refer to these while reading this part of my report.

External effects

- 42 Regarding how the proposed Plan Change might affect amenity and landscape appreciation issues for observers outside the site itself, the potentially affected population can be divided into the following categories for the purpose of consideration:

- Users of adjacent roads including SH1, Dunns Crossing Road and Burnham School Road;
- Users of relevant public places or facilities;
- Neighbours, including future occupiers of adjacent areas zoned for development.

State Highway 1

- 43 Currently the site has dense evergreen tree planting following its boundary with the SH1. Consequently, views into the site from this highway are particularly limited. There is a window of visibility available to a traveller as they pass the intersection with Dunns Crossing Road. This situation is not uncommon in relation to views from SH1 in the vicinity of Rolleston, although many views across open grazed farmland are also available. The openness of the landscape in these views is invariably punctuated by stands and lines of shelter and amenity trees, if not in the foreground, then in the mid-ground. Residential buildings are also a common site from SH1 in the vicinity of Rolleston.

- 44 The proposed Plan Change includes buffer vegetation, consisting of a mix of native tree and shrub species, along the entire length of the site's boundary with SH1. I understand that the purpose of this buffer planting is to allow no intervisibility between development and the highway, and also to provide for traffic noise mitigation. Future dwellings must also be set back at least 80 metres from the highway boundary. The window of visibility from the highway via the area of the Dunns Crossing Road intersection will allow views into a part of the proposed Countryside Area and further shelterbelt planting that encloses the individual allotments proposed for this part of the site.
- 45 I consider that the scene that will be available from SH1 in the future if the proposed Plan Change proceeds will essentially be a continuous sweep of vegetation. This vegetation will not be uniform but will be varied in terms of form, colour, texture, height and size and will be readily recognisable as a community of native species, although most observers will recognise it as being planted rather than being any sort of remnant. This highway-side treatment is similar to other stretches of the highway in the Rolleston vicinity.
- 46 I do not consider that the described situation can be said to have any significant adverse amenity or landscape effects when compared to the status quo. Travellers on the highway are invariably travelling at speed and the proposed Plan Change will create one more instance of a native vegetated roadside treatment that amounts to a very short part of a highway user's experience of the landscape.

Dunns Crossing Road

- 47 Dunns Crossing Road is a rural road that connects Selwyn Road with SH1. It skirts the western end of Rolleston township and forms the western extent of the Rolleston Urban Limits, as defined by existing Living 2A zoning and by the urban limits set out in Variation 1 to Proposed Change 1 to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement. It allows open views of rural pasture punctuated by mature shelter and amenity tree planting. Many buildings are seen from this road including residential development at close quarters.
- 48 The context of the site can be seen on Figure 1. To the immediate south of the subject site, between Burnham School Road and Brookside Road, Dunns Crossing Road is characterised by relatively dense residential land use on both sides of the road. This continues further to the south on the eastern side of Dunns Crossing Road, while the western side is occupied by the

buildings of the Tegal chicken farming operation. To the immediate east of the subject site lies an area of currently relatively open land that has been subdivided in accordance with the Living 2 Zone provisions, including a relatively dense residential subdivision adjacent to SH1 centred around the unformed Newman Road. Consequently the subject site's frontage with Dunns Crossing Road is unusual in comparison to adjacent land, in that it does not accommodate residential development or subdivision.



Photograph 2: 180° panorama looking into the site from Dunns Crossing Road adjacent to the existing site road entrance. (Enlarged versions of all photographs are appended to this report as **Appendix 5**).

- 49 Development that would be enabled by the proposed Plan Change will present a 50 metre wide strip of Countryside Area backed by a strip of shelterbelt planting, consisting largely of tall exotic evergreen trees, to Dunns Crossing Road. It is my understanding that the Countryside Areas are to consist of some rural productive use and are to be privately owned (whether singularly or jointly). I have no particular expertise regarding what uses may be practical but I understand that grazing, lucerne and other cropping uses have been discussed. It is intended that these areas will be open or at least visually permeable in order to provide long views across productive land. A 50 metre wide strip along Dunns Crossing Road will create a considerable degree of openness and will allow long views parallel with the road. A glimpse of a long westerly view will also be available adjacent to the road access point.
- 50 Views will be available over the Countryside Area and past the buffer planting when a viewer is adjacent to the proposed development's road access point off Dunns Crossing Road, adjacent to either of the two pedestrian access points to Dunns Crossing Road, or adjacent to the intersection between Dunns Crossing Road and Burnham School Road. A fair idea of the type of development layout that will eventuate can be gained from the "Preliminary Subdivision and Landscape Plan – rendered version" submitted with the Plan Change application. There will be some visibility of buildings through the buffer planting from the

points discussed above and the road entrance will make it relatively plain to users of Dunns Crossing Road that some sort of residential land use lies within the site.

- 51 The SDC's "Walking and Cycling Strategy" envisages a pedestrian/cycle trail linking Rolleston, Templeton and Lincoln. I understand that there has been some discussion within the SDC that this may involve a pedestrian cycle trail following Dunns Crossing Road in this area. Should a trail of this sort be desired in the future, it appears that this could be easily formed on the road reserve, with the proposed Countryside Area to the immediate west, providing a high amenity pedestrian experience. The proposed Plan Change would also provide two pedestrian links (in addition to the main road access point) that would allow pedestrian access from the Dunns Crossing Road trail, through the public roads and footpaths of the site to Burnham School Road.
- 52 Given the presence of the Countryside Areas, the shelterbelt planting, and the occasional views through to residential allotments, I consider that the type of impression that will be presented to users of Dunns Crossing Road will be a considerable change from the current open paddock situation. While it will be apparent to users of this road that some sort of residential use lies to their immediate west, the exact nature or extent of it will not be clear. The Countryside Area and shelterbelt vegetation will mean that a rural productive character is particularly evident and, in the long term, visual evidence of residential land use will be subservient to this. The currently existing impression that one is on the edge of built settlement, with open, purely productive land stretching out to the west will change; it will be clear that some settlement now lies to the west, albeit with a rural character.

Burnham School Road

- 53 Burnham School Road is a rural road that approaches Rolleston from the southwest. It provides broad views across open pasture land punctuated by occasional buildings and stands and lines of tree planting to both the north and the south. To the immediate west of the site (but on the opposite side of Burnham School Road) lie the Rolleston Resource Recovery Park and the wastewater and sewage treatment and disposal facilities. The SDC propose to designate a considerably expanded area, encompassing land on both sides of the road, for the purposes of wastewater treatment and disposal. In the event that the subject site was rezoned as is proposed for rural residential purposes and the proposed expansion of the

wastewater facility proceeds, then the proposed wastewater disposal area would adjoin the western boundary of the proposed rural residential zone. The future experience of travelling on Burnham School Road will undoubtedly be affected by the manner in which these sites and their road frontages are treated.



Photograph 3: 180° panorama looking south from Burnham School Road towards Brookside Road. (Enlarged versions of all photographs are appended to this report as **Appendix 5**).

- 54 The development that would be enabled by the proposed Plan Change will affect the eastern part of Burnham School Road, to the east of the Rolleston Resource Recovery Park and the wastewater and sewage treatment and disposal facilities. The area on the northern side of the road would change from pasture divided by shelterbelts to development as can be seen on the ODP and the submitted “Preliminary Subdivision and Landscape Plan – rendered version”. A series of rural dwellings, spaced approximately 50 metres apart, will be presented to the road. The various design, landscaping and setback controls outlined in paragraph 21 above will mean that dwellings will be at least 15 metres from the road boundary, that only a limited amount of each allotment’s road frontage may be paved (i.e. driveway), and that there is considerable planting within this setback. Travellers on Burnham School Road will have the length of their views across the site limited by the two north-south running shelterbelts, and will also gain views up the corridors of the Countryside Areas across a productive land use. In these respects, the parts of the site used for living purposes that are presented to Burnham School Road will read as three distinct blocks.
- 55 Regarding landscape character and how this is perceived by observers on the relevant part of Burnham School Road, the change will be considerable. It will be plain to any observer that the land on the northern side of the road is not agricultural land but an area of rural residential living associated with Rolleston town, similar to others on the outskirts of Canterbury’s larger rural towns. In this respect (in terms of landscape perception or appreciation) the part of the site seen from Burnham School Road will become less natural and less agricultural than it currently is, however the specific design features of the development will soften the potential

impact of this change. In addition, the site's situation, being immediately adjacent to the Rolleston urban area, having the Resource Recovery Park and wastewater and sewage facilities to its immediate west, and having rural living land use to its south, will mean that a rural residential character in this location is not particularly unexpected or surprising to an observer. Consequently, I find that the change in landscape character will not be particularly adverse in its specific context.

Users of relevant public places or facilities

- 56 Users of the relevant roads have been discussed above. Excepting SH1, these are most likely to be residents of Rolleston or its immediately surrounding area. These road users are likely to pass the site frequently and will gain much more familiarity and understanding of it than travellers passing it on a much less frequent basis.
- 57 The same can be said of users of nearby public places or facilities. No public places adjoin the site (excepting roads), however, many Rolleston residents will be relatively regular visitors to the Resource Recovery Park. Users of this facility will pass the site via Dunns Crossing Road and will experience it as described above. Undoubtedly, they will know exactly what the site is and will perceive it as accommodating people who are effectively Rolleston residents; essentially a rural residential adjunct to Rolleston town.
- 58 Obviously, there is no current public access to or within the site itself. As discussed above, in the event that a pedestrian/cycle trail is sought adjacent to Dunns Crossing Road, it could be aligned so as to run adjacent to the proposed strip of Countryside Area that follows the road frontage, providing a pleasant rural amenity. Users of this trail could also gain access into and through the site via the two proposed public easements and the network of proposed public roads in order to complete an internal loop or to access Burnham School Road. The specific treatment of roadside footpaths within the development is detailed within provisions proposed by the Plan Change and would ensure a relatively soft, green finish. Coupled with the setback and landscaping provisions, and the fact that many of the proposed roads follow the Countryside Areas, this would mean that users of these footpaths would experience a relatively quiet, leafy, countryside form of landscape aesthetics.

Neighbours, including future occupiers of adjacent areas zoned for development.

- 59 To the north of the site lies SH1, as has been discussed.
- 60 To the west of the site lies what is currently open pasture land that is in the same ownership as the subject site (i.e. the SPBL). As discussed above, the SDC is seeking to expand an existing designation to provide for wastewater treatment and disposal over this area. Given that the land is in the same ownership as the subject site and that the land is unoccupied grazed pasture, it is hard to see how the proposal would have any effect on its current occupiers.
- 61 If we consider the change in use of this neighbouring site from grazing to wastewater treatment and disposal, it is my understanding that this type of land use often involves some structures, along with large open areas used to dispose wastewater to ground. Such operations may or may not be enclosed by surrounding vegetation.
- 62 I have no expertise regarding what parts of the area might be most likely to accommodate the structures, although it is my understanding that the land to the west of the subject site is to be used for disposal and therefore will likely remain as open pasture in the event that the proposed wastewater facility expansion proceeds. I am unsure whether or not such a wastewater operation is likely to involve tree planting along the boundary that it shares with the subject site. In any event, I can see no realistic way in which it could be said that the proposed Plan Change will adversely affect the wastewater operation in terms of landscape or amenity issues.
- 63 To the south of the subject site, on the opposite side of Burnham School Road, the landscape is characterised by open pasture punctuated by occasional visible buildings, structures, shelter hedgerows and mature trees. Grazing appears to be the dominant land use. The land between the Resource Recovery Park and Dunns Crossing Road is held in a number of ownerships. Closest to the Resource Recovery Park is the Ponsonby land, which includes a dwelling close to Burnham School Road. To the east of this are a collection of large, open landholdings that stretch southwards to meet Brookside Road. The only buildings on these lots are close to Brookside Road, in the southern parts of the landholdings, and are difficult to see from Burnham School Road. Moving west, there are then three small allotments (of approximately 5000m² each) that each accommodate a dwelling adjacent to Dunns Crossing

Road that potentially look into the subject site. The western two of these lots have dwellings on them. The area of these three smaller lots is zoned Living 2, while the remainder of the relevant area is zoned Outer Plains.

- 64 The bulk of this area to the south of the subject site is used for farming purposes and is zoned as such. It appears that this situation will not be affected by the proposed Plan Change; farming will continue. The various buildings (including dwellings) that are located close to Brookside Road are situated such that views to the subject site from these buildings will be difficult. Any views will be distant and will be across large expanses of farmland. I consider that the amenity of occupiers of these buildings will not be affected to any significant degree.
- 65 Occupiers of the Ponsonby dwelling and the three smaller allotments close to Dunns Crossing Road will be subject to a much more noticeable change in relation to landscape character. The Ponsonby dwelling is situated relatively close to Burnham School Road but has established garden planting in its front yard, including a relatively dense sweep of shrubs along the road boundary. This planting appears to mean that the road and the subject site will not be visible from inside the dwelling itself. Nonetheless, occupants of this dwelling will experience the proposed development frequently and at close quarters from their outdoor spaces and whenever travelling to or from their property. The rural residential nature of the subject site and associated activity (traffic, people, etc) will be clear. An idea of what can be expected can be gained from the submitted "Preliminary Subdivision and Landscape Plan – rendered version". It appears that the 5 south-western dwellings on the subject site would be apparent from the Ponsonby property. I consider that the amenity of the occupiers of the Ponsonby dwelling will still be a rural type of amenity. They will have considerable open space around them including large areas of farmland. They will, however, have visual contact with a number of dwellings and residential activity and will no longer have a stretch of entirely inbuilt agricultural land between themselves and Rolleston. In this sense, their amenity will become somewhat less rural than it currently is.
- 66 The three smaller allotments adjacent to Dunns Crossing Road are owned by (moving west to east) SPBL, Chambers, and Telfer and McKerrow. Each lot contains a dwelling. The Telfer and McKerrow lot gains road access off Dunns Crossing Road and its northern boundary (i.e. its boundary with Burnham School Road) is planted out in relatively mature poplars. The other two lots gain access off Burnham School Road but (excepting their driveways) their northern

boundaries are similarly planted. It appears that there is very little (if any) visual access from these dwellings or their associated outdoor areas to the subject site. Notwithstanding this, similar to the situation with the Ponsonby dwelling, the changes that would occur on the subject site as a result of the proposed Plan Change will be obvious to the occupiers of these lots (particularly the western two). The three most south-eastern dwellings enabled by the Plan Change would be opposite these allotments. Given that these lots are immediately adjacent to existing residential land use, that they are particularly close to Rolleston, and that they will see relatively little of the subject development, I consider that the degree of change to their amenities will be less than that associated with the Ponsonby dwelling, although their amenities will still noticeably alter.



Photograph 4: 180° panorama from the road verge immediately adjacent to the Chambers lot looking towards the site. (Enlarged versions of all photographs are appended to this report as **Appendix 5**).

67 To the east of the subject site lies an area of land that is currently open pasture that is also within the Living 2 Zone. No dwellings have been built in this area but it has been subdivided in part for residential use. The northern third of this strip of land has been subdivided into a collection of 5000m² lots centred around the currently roughly formed Newman Road. The remainder of this strip of land adjacent to Dunns Crossing Road that runs between SH1 and Burnham School Road is held in three 4ha allotments owned by Worthwhile Limited. As mentioned previously, despite its current Living 2 zoning, this area to the east of Dunns Crossing Road is earmarked as being within the Rolleston Urban Limits, as set out in Variation 1 to Proposed Change 1 to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement. I understand this to mean that it can be expected that this land will ultimately be subdivided and developed to provide for urban residential activity.

68 In terms of amenity and landscape considerations, it is relevant to note that the owners of the land to the east of the subject site have no buildings on it, have not yet developed it in an urban way, but expect to do so in the future. Given this situation, we must consider the effect of rezoning the subject site in the way that is proposed by the Plan Change when compared

with the status quo; will it be good landscape planning, or will it be significantly detrimental to the future urban area in terms of amenities and landscape appreciation?

- 69 If we consider the status quo situation, the land to the west of the future urban area would remain as rural land, most likely used for some productive use. I have no expertise regarding the economic desirability of this situation. Occupiers of the very western part of the urban area would have an unbuilt outlook to their west of some sort; perhaps grazing, perhaps forestry, perhaps some other use. Dunns Crossing Road would become a much busier road since it would now access significantly more residential land. The SDC's envisaged walkway could be formed down Dunns Crossing Road but would simply be a footpath adjacent to the road formation.
- 70 Under the proposed situation, development enabled by the Plan Change would present itself to the western end of the future urban area as described in paragraphs 47 to 52 above; it will be obvious that the site is developed but its interface with Dunns Crossing Road will be of a rural, vegetated, unbuilt character.
- 71 In broad terms, I consider that the difference in effect between the proposed situation and the status quo situation in this regard is that under the status quo future occupants of the urban area would have the experience of being on the edge of the area of residential land use with agricultural land to the west (although this may take a number of forms as discussed above), while under the proposed situation, these occupants would not be on the edge of residential land use, they would have residential land use spreading out to their west, albeit at a relatively low density, with a rural character, and presenting a particularly soft façade to Dunns Crossing Road.
- 72 While the two situations discussed above are considerably different, in an overall sense, I consider that the proposed situation is not significantly adverse in terms of amenity and landscape appreciation when compared to the status quo. The amenities of future occupants of the urban area in relation to the subject site will be pleasant and of a rural character, primarily due to the specific design of the eastern part of the ODP and the many design restrictions associated with the future development of the subject site under the proposed Plan Change provisions.

Summary regarding external effects

73 In summary, I find that in relation to potential adverse effects of the proposed Plan Change that relate to landscape and amenity, the following points are relevant:

- The amenity and landscape appreciation of users of Dunns Crossing Road will be considerably different under the proposed situation compared to the status quo situation in that it will be clear that some settlement lies to the west, although its exact extent and nature will not be clear (since only a limited part of the site will be visible). The design of the ODP is such that a rural productive character will be particularly evident and visual evidence of residential land use will be subservient to this.
- There will also be a considerable difference between the two situations for observers on the relevant part of Burnham School Road. It will be plain to any observer that the land on the northern side of the road is not agricultural land but an area of rural residential living associated with Rolleston town. In this respect the site will become less natural and less agricultural than it currently is. The specific design features of the development will soften the potential impact of this change and the site's location adjacent to other activities will mean that a rural residential character in this location is not particularly unexpected or surprising to an observer.
- Given that the land to the west of the site is in the same ownership as the site itself, is entirely unbuilt pasture and is possibly to be used for wastewater treatment and disposal, I consider that there will be no relevant effect on these neighbours.
- Some occupiers of land to the south of the site will be affected by the proposal in that their landscape experience will become somewhat less rural and less natural. This applies primarily to the Ponsonby property, and to a lesser degree to the three small lots adjacent to Dunns Crossing Road. The design details of the proposed Plan Change will mitigate the potential degree of this effect and importantly, the site will not be visible from the dwellings themselves.
- Given the future of the unbuilt land to the east of the subject site, I consider that the proposed Plan Change will bring about a different type of landscape experience than the

status quo to future occupiers of this area. However, given the details of the ODP, I consider that the amenity will remain pleasant and of a rural character.

Internal effects

- 74 The specific type of development that will occur within the site if the proposed Plan Change proceeds will be shaped by the ODP and the proposed plan provisions relating to design methods and standards that I set out in my paragraph 21. In turn, the specifics of the development will determine the type of amenity and landscape experience that future occupants and users of the site will have. In order to examine this type of amenity and landscape experience, we must consider the ODP and proposed plan provisions together.

The outline development plan

- 75 It is helpful to examine the ODP in conjunction with the submitted “Preliminary Subdivision and Landscape Plan – rendered version”. This latter plan gives an impression of the development pattern that would be the ultimate result of the proposed Plan Change and takes into account the various setback and planting requirements. The ODP itself sets out the layout of allotments, roading, Countryside Areas, reserves, buffer, shelterbelt and street tree planting. Species lists for the various types of tree planting are also given.
- 76 In effect, the layout of the ODP breaks the residential allotments of the site into blocks, separated by the Countryside Areas. The Countryside Areas are often followed by a road corridor on one side, effectively increasing their width. The ODP also includes details of the treatment of the road corridors, which feature a 6 to 7 metre wide formation with a gravel edge to the seal, a footpath on one side, and three-metre-wide groundcover planted swales on either side of the road formation. The Countryside Areas themselves have been discussed previously and will provide open space areas that are contiguous with the surrounding rural land, providing a rural amenity in themselves, but also allowing view shafts from within the site out into the surrounding landscape.
- 77 The spaces and length of views within the site will be further broken up by the bands of shelter trees, which will have the effect of enclosing vertical walls. Within the road corridors, informal clumps of street tree planting are comprised of mixed species.

- 78 The individual allotments shown on the ODP range in area from 4000m² to 15467m². The “Preliminary Subdivision and Landscape Plan – Rendered version” demonstrates the fact that only a small part of each of these allotments will be built. The bulk of them will remain as open space, as directed by the relevant plan provisions.
- 79 The overall effect of the layout directed by the ODP will be to create a relatively broken pattern of development. The pattern will be broken in a horizontal sense by the corridors of Countryside Areas, that will effectively separate the allotments into blocks. In a vertical sense, the belts of tree planting will create visual separation between the different parts of the site and will limit the length of views. The rectilinear road pattern that is proposed avoids layouts that are more typical of a suburban setting such as curving roads and cul-de-sacs. The large scale tree planting (particularly the shelter belt type planting) will bring aspects of rural character of the surrounding landscape into the heart of the site and incorporate them into the residential activity. The Countryside areas will have the same effect; the journey to or from any dwelling will involve travelling beside and through areas of productive land use, and many allotments will have an outlook over this productive land use as their main view.
- 80 Similarly, the proposed road treatments will avoid cues that trigger a perception of a suburban type character. There will be no regularly spaced avenues of trees and no kerb-and-channel. There will be vegetated swales, large grassed verges, footpaths on only one side of the road and irregular mixed clumps of tree planting.

Proposed provisions that relate to design methods and techniques

- 81 As discussed in my paragraph 21, in addition to the proposed ODP, the Plan Change includes a number of plan provisions that will restrict the manner in which individual allotments may be developed. These provisions are set out in detail in the documents that accompany the proposed Plan Change and I will not duplicate them here, rather I will comment on their effects in terms of landscape character and amenity.
- 82 The proposed plan provisions will have most effect in terms of street frontage, i.e. the manner in which the individual allotments present themselves to the roads. Firstly, any dwelling will be setback at least 15 metres from the road boundary and this setback area will be considerably planted in accordance with a design that must be submitted for Council approval. There is also a restriction on the amount of paving that may be within this road setback area such that

driveways or vehicle hardstand areas will not be a dominant part of the street frontage. The combined effect of these provisions will be that the individual allotments will present a particularly soft and green appearance to the roads. It will be obvious to road users that residential use exists within any given allotment, but built elements will not be visually dominant. A large, considerably vegetated area will front the road.

- 83 The manner in which boundaries may be fenced is also controlled by proposed plan provisions and is an important point in relation to the type of visual amenity that the development brings. The proposed Plan Change provisions restrict any such fencing post-and-rail or post-and-wire only, to a maximum height of 1.2 metres and must be at least 50% open. These restrictions apply to all fencing on any allotment's road boundary as well as any fencing in the area between the road boundary and the line of the front of the principal building on the site. This will have the result of ensuring that the part of each allotment that fronts any road will be free from visually impermeable structures, will be open but will be considerably vegetated. Coupled with the treatment of the road reserves themselves and the adjacent Countryside Areas, as discussed above, the type of aesthetic pattern will again be relatively rural in nature and distinct from a suburban character, which is often (at least partially) characterised by visual compartmentalisation via high or visually solid fencing.
- 84 Building coverage within any individual allotment is restricted to the lesser of 10% or 500m². In conjunction with the size of the allotments and the various setback and landscaping conditions discussed above, this will ensure a relatively high proportion of open space within the site, following development. As can be seen on the "Preliminary Subdivision and Landscape Plan – Rendered version", future occupiers or pedestrians within the site in future will have ample views across open rural space. There will be ample view-shafts between buildings to open areas.

The type of amenity and landscape experience will be provided within the site by the proposed Plan Change

- 85 Further to the points made above, I find that future occupiers and users of the site (if the proposed Plan Change proceeds) will experience a type of amenity that is more rural in nature than a suburban landscape but more urban (or suburban) than a true farming landscape. Privacy, outlooks across rural land uses, spaciousness and quietness will be

experienced to a higher degree than one would expect in a suburban area. There will be an awareness of productive land use and that entirely rural land uses surround the site to the south and west. There will be frequent views available (often via the corridors of the Countryside Areas) to these rural land uses that surround the site and additionally, rural character and land uses will encroach into the heart of the site itself.

- 86 It is also relevant to consider that many future owners of the individual lots themselves (particularly the larger ones) are likely to carry out some sort of rural land use (albeit perhaps hobby type rural land uses) within their allotments, which would further emphasise a rural character within the site.
- 87 As alluded to previously, the ODP stipulates lot sizes within the proposed zone and these range between 4000m² to 15467m² in area. As a general point, I consider that a hypothetical large development of allotments of approximately 5000m² each will often fail to deliver a rural residential (as opposed to suburban) form of amenity to its occupants. Such developments can feel simply like large-lot suburbia to users and occupants. It is my opinion that this will not be the case in relation to development that will be enabled by the proposed Plan Change due to the specific configuration set out by the ODP, including the lines of tree planting and the Countryside Areas, and by the many proposed provisions relating to design methods and techniques, as has been discussed above.
- 88 I consider that due to the presence and design of the Countryside Areas and the views to the surrounding landscape that will be provided, occupants and users of the site will have an experience of connection to the surrounding rural landscape. This connection may not necessarily stem from direct visual contact to the surrounding landscape from every individual allotment. In many cases it may stem from the experience of travelling to or from or entering the site, the outlook over the Countryside Areas, or simply the feeling that open rural space is not far away. This feeling of connection to a truly rural or farming landscape (rather than simply being in a suburb of a city or town) in turn leads to the perceived qualities of space, privacy, clean air, etc that are sought by those who choose to live in a rural residential development. I consider that it is fair to say that the proposed Plan Change will provide a rural residential type of amenity for future occupiers and users. While the development will immediately abut Rolleston's urban area, it will be very distinct from this urban area in terms of landscape character and the type of amenity that it provides for occupiers and users.

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of effects of the proposed Plan Change

External effects

- 89 The amenity and landscape appreciation of users of Dunns Crossing Road and Burnham School Road will be considerably different under the proposed situation compared to the status quo situation in that it will be clear that the land use of the site is some form of rural residential development and is not traditionally agricultural. However, the design of the ODP is such that a rural productive character will be particularly evident from Dunns Crossing Road and visual evidence of residential land use will be subservient to this. From Burnham School Road the residential aspect of the site's land use will be more plain, however, the specific design features of the development will soften the potential impact of this change and the site's location adjacent to other activities will mean that a rural residential character in this location is not particularly unexpected or surprising to an observer.
- 90 Regarding neighbouring land owners, the land to the west of the site is pasture in the same ownership as the site itself that will possibly be used for the disposal of wastewater. Consequently, I consider that there will be no relevant effects in terms of amenity or landscape appreciation.
- 91 In relation to the land to the east of the site, I consider that the proposed Plan Change will bring about a different type of landscape experience than the status quo to future occupiers of this area. However, given the details of the ODP, I consider that the amenity will remain pleasant and of a rural character.
- 92 To the south of the site, the Ponsonby property and the three small allotments adjacent to Dunns Crossing Road will have a landscape experience that is somewhat less rural and less natural if the proposed Plan Change proceeds. The design details of the proposed Plan Change will mitigate the potential degree of this effect and importantly, the site will not be visible from the dwellings themselves.

Internal effects

- 93 The ODP and the proposed plan provisions that relate to design standards and methods will bring about a specific type of development within the site that will result in a specific type of amenity and landscape experience for future occupants and users of the site.
- 94 The development pattern will be broken both horizontally and vertically. Large tree planting, including shelterbelt type planting, and the grid of Countryside Areas will break up the pattern of rural residential allotments and will bring elements of true rural character into the central parts of the site. The design details of the public realm have also been formulated to avoid a suburban character.
- 95 Allotment sizes and proposed building coverage provisions are such that future dwellings within the site will be relatively well spaced, as can be seen on the “Preliminary Subdivision and Landscape Plan – Rendered version”. Future owners may carry out some form of rural land use such as horse grazing, high value cropping or hobby farming. Proposed plan provisions will result in the individual rural residential allotments having a particularly soft, unbuilt and vegetated road frontage.
- 96 The type of amenity and landscape experience that future occupants and users will have will be distinct from a suburban experience; it will be more rural in nature. Productive rural land use will be a close, obvious and inescapable part of the experience of being in the site. There will be considerably more privacy, spaciousness, quietness and views across rural productive land than would be expected in suburbia. There will be an experience of connection to rural land use and to the surrounding rural landscape, sometimes via direct views from future dwellings to the surrounding rural landscape, sometimes via views across or along the corridors of the Countryside Areas, sometimes via the experience of travelling to or from the site and sometimes from using the site’s public spaces.

The effects of the proposed Plan Change in relation to the relevant statutory documents

The Selwyn District Council Rural Residential Background Report

- 97 The background report sets out many criteria that appropriate rural residential development should be congruent with. These criteria are to be found in the parts of the report that I list in my paragraph 39.
- 98 I find that the proposed Plan Change is consistent with the criteria of the background report to a high degree. It seems that all of the design restrictions and techniques that are included as proposed provisions in the Plan Change are supported by the background report, and, vice-versa, the proposed Plan Change goes a long way towards realising the objectives that are sought by the draft report.
- 99 It appears that the spatial location of the site is generally consistent with the background report and with the many constraints that it sets out. However, there is conflict in terms of the draft report's objective to preclude development from the Rural Outer Plains Zone. This matter is raised by the background report in two places. The objective seems to be motivated by the desire to keep rural residential development from being in isolated, open rural areas, away from other settlements¹¹. Given that the Rural Outer Plains Zone immediately abuts the residential part of Rolleston in the vicinity of the proposed SPBL Plan Changes, it seems that the proposed Plan Change will be in accordance with the intent of this matter, if not with its exact wording.
- 100 In terms of design methods and techniques, again, the proposed Plan Change is entirely consistent with the vast majority of the background report's criteria. There are some areas of inconsistency, as follows.
- 101 One criteria, set out in paragraph 4.6 of the background report states that limiting the number of dwellings within a single location, in order to avoid collective effects of intensified land uses, will assist in differentiating rural-residential character from other densities of development. The proposed Plan Change provides for a large development area. Notwithstanding this, for reasons stated throughout this report (that generally stem from the

¹¹ Selwyn District Council – Rural-Residential Background Report, paragraphs 4.6 and 6.6.

proposed ODP and provisions that relate to design methods and techniques), I consider that the proposed Plan Change will bring about a pleasant and rural type of residential amenity that is distinct from a suburban type.

- 102 A single criterion in paragraph 4.4 of the draft report identifies the maintenance of views as a constraint on potential rural residential development. In this regard, I make the point that practically any new area of rural residential development will affect the views of its close neighbours. As discussed, this is the case with the proposed Plan Change.
- 103 In an overall sense, I believe that there is a high degree of consistency between the background report and the proposed Plan Change. With reference to the criteria of the background report that I set out in my paragraph 39, I count there to be 81 criteria, some of which are repetitions. Some of these criteria relate to matters outside my area of expertise, but in terms of landscape and amenity matters, I consider that the proposed Plan Change is only inconsistent with 5 of the criteria. These 5 criteria relate to the matters discussed in my paragraphs 101 and 102 above.
- 104 Given the sheer number of criteria in the background report, it is hard to imagine any potential proposed rural residential development being consistent with all of them. In practical terms, I consider that this would be impossible. It is important to note that the draft background report does not describe the many criteria that it sets out as being a check-list that any potential development must comply with. Rather, they appear to be matters to take into account when considering a potential development.

The Selwyn District Plan

- 105 Regarding the amenities and landscape values of the rural land surrounding the site, I consider that the proposed Plan Change will be consistent with the relevant Objectives and Policies of the SDP that I set out in my paragraph 31. As discussed, I consider that the amenities and outlook of some immediate neighbours and road users will change significantly, although not in a particularly adverse way.
- 106 Regarding the provisions of the SDP that I set out in my paragraph 32, I consider that the encroachment of a type of residential land use into the Rural Area of the Canterbury Plains will be spatially clustered with existing township and infrastructural development and hence

will be logical in landscape planning terms, it will not undermine the appreciated character of the Canterbury Plains as a whole nor will it contribute to the coalescence of Canterbury's townships.

- 107 Despite being immediately adjacent to Rolleston township, the proposed new area of Living 3 Zone will provide a spacious, well vegetated, pleasant living environment with a character that is distinct from the existing urban area. It will provide a type of living environment that is not currently available. The amenities of both the rural and township areas of Rolleston will generally be maintained.

The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement and Proposed Change 1

- 108 I discuss Proposed Change 1 to the CRPS in paragraphs 27 and 28 of this report and set out the aspects that give guidance to the assessment of the appropriateness of rural residential development. Following my assessment of effects, I consider that the proposed Plan Change will provide for development that:

- provides an average density of more than 1 residential unit per hectare;
- in my understanding, does not give rise to significant reverse sensitivity effects (although I note that this consideration is somewhat outside my area of expertise);
- is integrated with the urban area of Rolleston (while remaining distinct from it in terms of character);
- Avoids significant adverse ecological effects; and
- Is therefore entirely consistent with the intentions of Proposed Change 1 that relate to landscape and amenity issues associated with rural residential development.

- 109 In relation to the CRPS itself, I reiterate that the site is not part of a landscape of regional significance and therefore the proposed Plan Change is not inconsistent with the landscape aspects of the CRPS.

The Resource Management Act 1991

110 Following my assessment of effects, I find that the proposed Plan Change is consistent with the parts of the Act that I discuss in my paragraph 25.

Overall Conclusion

111 In summary, I find that the proposed Plan Change will change the character of the site from pasture to a rural residential pattern of development. This will change the amenities and landscape experience of some immediate neighbours and users of adjacent public roads but not in a particularly adverse way. This is primarily due to the characteristics of the specific context into which the proposed area of zoning will be introduced and because of the specifics of the ODP and proposed plan provisions relating to design methods and techniques. The type of amenity and landscape experience that will be experienced by future occupants and users of the site will be pleasant and of a relatively rural character, distinct from a suburban experience.

Ben Espie
VIVIAN + ESPIE LTD
1 April 2010

APPENDIX 1: VISUAL AND LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT



SELWYN PLANTATION BOARD LIMITED

Rural-Residential Development

VISUAL & LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
HOLMES BLOCK

April 2009
1021-127337-01

Selwyn Plantation Board Limited, Rural-Residential Development, Rolleston

**VISUAL & LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
HOLMES BLOCK**

April 2009

Prepared by
Harrison Grierson Consultants Limited

Office of Origin
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Table of Contents

SECTION 1 - OVERVIEW	
1.1 Overview	1
<i>Site Location Plan</i>	1
SECTION 2 - VISUAL & LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT	
2.1 Site Context and Landscape Character	2
2.2 Site Description	2
2.3 The Proposal	2
SECTION 3 - VISUAL AND LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT	
3.1 Visual & Landscape Assessment Methodology	3
3.2 Visual & Landscape Assessment	3
<i>Representative Viewpoint Location Map</i>	4
<i>Representative Viewpoints 1 to 6</i>	5
SECTION 4 - CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES; RECOMMENDATIONS	
4.1 Constraints and Opportunities	7
4.2 Proposals and Recommendations	7
4.3 Conclusion	7
APPENDIX A – PRELIMINARY SUBDIVISION CONCEPT PLAN	

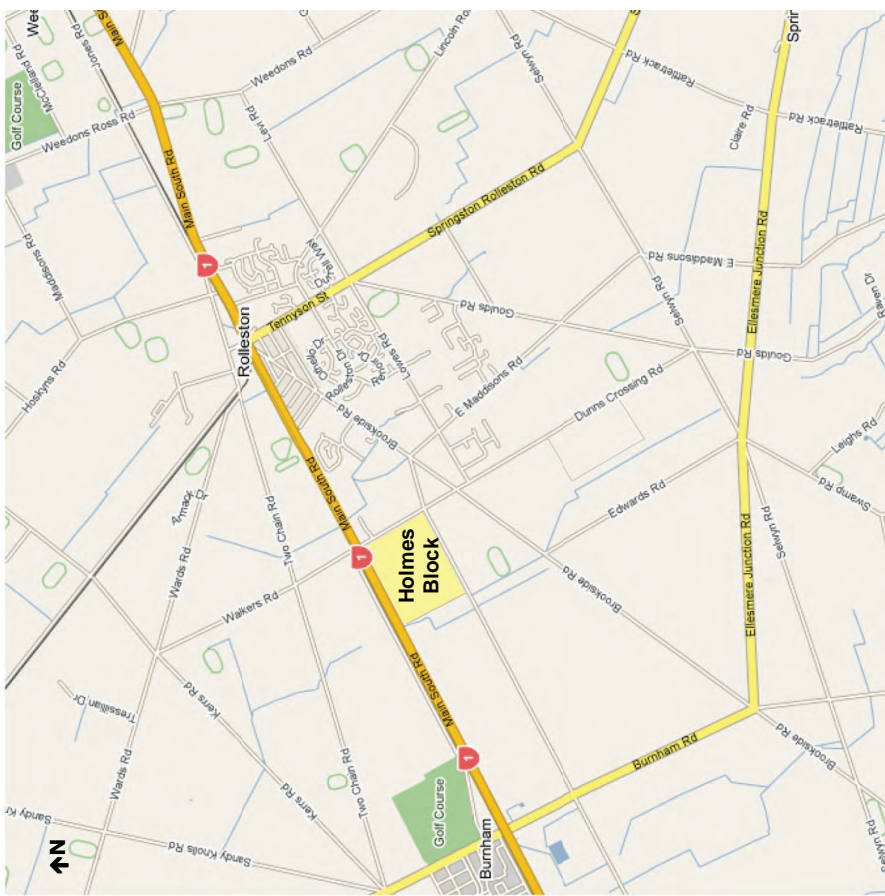
1.1 Overview

This Visual and Landscape Assessment has been prepared in support of a Plan Change Request by Selwyn Plantation Board Limited to enable Rural-Residential Development at a site located between State Highway One, Dunns Crossing Road and Burnham School Road Rolleston.

This report specifically addresses the possible visual effects associated with the proposed change in use from open rural land to rural-residential, with an average lot size of 5,000m². A Subdivision and Landscape Concept Plan for the proposed development has been prepared by Harrison Grierson Consultants Limited (HGCL) dated March 2009, (reference 127337-PSC1_v22) and this will be used as the basis for this assessment. The Plan Change embodies a graphic derivation of this, in proposed Appendix 34, and various controls and criteria associated with its key design elements.

This report will address the following:

- **Site Context and Landscape Character:** An outline of the environmental characteristics and natural and physical resources to be found on the property;
- **Site Description:** Identification and description of landscape characteristics of the site;
- **Overview of Proposal:** This overview is based on the Subdivision and Landscape Concept Plan, March 2009.
- **Visual and Landscape Methodology:** How the assessment was undertaken;
- **Visual and Landscape Assessment:** Discussion of the visual nature and visual extent of the property through assessing the site from publicly accessible key representative viewpoints;
- **Constraints and Opportunities:** Discussion of the site's constraints and opportunities with particular regard to the property's physical composition, landscape character and site context and its ability to absorb development;
- **Recommendations:** Outline of any measures necessary to avoid, mitigate and remedy any potential adverse visual effects or provide positive visual effects on the landscape. The overriding goal is to achieve a rural residential subdivision that retains elements of rural character when viewed from within the development and from the surrounding landscape.
- **Conclusion:** Summary of the report.



Site Location Plan

2.1 Site Context and Landscape Character

Landscape Character of the Site: The site is situated in an established rural setting just to the west of Rolleston. It was recently covered by a pine plantation which has now been felled for the purposes of timber production. The site is currently used for grazing stock and has several shelter belts (currently 2-3m in height). The surrounding land is predominantly used for grazing. Hedgerows or shelterbelt plantings are common along boundary fences. There are no plantings within the open paddocks (excluding hedgerows along the boundary to the site) thus allowing views to be afforded over the entire site from public roads where no shelterbelts exist along the road boundary.

Proposed Urban Expansion of Rolleston: It is currently proposed to limit the future urban expansion of Rolleston township to the eastern side of Dunns Crossing Road, which (if adopted) will lead to the site having suburban residential uses on the opposite side of Dunns Crossing Road.

Landscape Character from Surrounding Roads: The Holmes Block is located on flat land which is typical in landscape character for the Rolleston area. The Holmes Block is opposite to several recent residential subdivisions (the eastern side of Dunns Crossing Road) which form the current western extent of the Rolleston township. To the south-west of the Holmes Block is a recycling centre, while a wastewater treatment plant is proposed to be developed on land to the west of the Holmes Block. There are views of the site from surrounding roads and these are discussed below.

State Highway One is the primary transport corridor in the immediate area and carries a large amount of traffic. The Highway is straight as it approaches Rolleston, and affords views across open grazing farmland which are sometimes interrupted by tall hedgerow and shelter belt plantings, often 6-10m in height. Residential buildings are located along the Highway, and are occasionally associated with large, mature trees, well-maintained grounds. Residential properties are generally separated from each other by wide open paddocks. Generally the visual character of the area is typical of the rural plains of Canterbury. Arrival at the edge of Rolleston is signalled visually by the presence of a bund and fence for acoustic purposes on the south side of State Highway One, commencing just east of Dunns Crossing Road.

Dunns Crossing Road is a rural road connecting Selwyn Road with State Highway One, and also provides access to and from Rolleston township from the west. It affords open rural views that are interrupted with shelter belt plantings and occasional mature trees along the roadside and surrounding residential buildings. If the future urban limit proposals of Selwyn District Council are adopted, Dunns Crossing Road will form the western extent of the Rolleston township, therefore, eastern views from Dunns Crossing Road will change from rural to residential.

Burnham School Road runs parallel to State Highway One and is a rural road. It provides access to Rolleston Township from the west. Burnham School Road affords open rural views that are interrupted with, shelter belt plantings and occasional mature trees along the roadside and surrounding residential buildings. If the proposals of Selwyn District Council are adopted, Burnham School Road will pass between large areas of land that are used for the proposed wastewater treatment plant. The future experience of travelling along Burnham School Road will be dependant on the landscape proposals associated with the future wastewater treatment plant.

2.2 Site Description

The Holmes Block covers approximately 92 hectares and is currently utilised as grazing land. It has road boundaries with Dunns Crossing Road, Burnham School Road and State Highway One. The property is generally flat with no permanent drainage lines or streams present. There are no buildings on the site and the only trees are in immature shelter belt plantings that are currently 2-3m in height. The site is currently zoned rural.

2.3 The Proposal

The proposal as per the Subdivision and Landscape Concept Plan aims to establish a rural-residential zoning for the site with a proposed lot size average of 5,000m²+. The proposed zone provisions allow a minimum lot size of 2,000m², though the Concept Plan is designed with a minimum lot size of 3,000m². This proposal will result in a visual change from the existing landscape character which is currently very open and rural, but as discussed in this report change does not automatically result in adverse visual effects if the appropriate controls are adopted.

Layout: The Subdivision and Landscape Concept Plan for the proposed development includes design elements that will help reinforce "rural character" by retaining and proposing elements found in typical rural landscapes. At the subdivision layout scale this means recognising the rectilinear tenure pattern typical of the Canterbury plains, and avoiding roading and lot patterns typical of "suburban" development (i.e. arbitrary curves and culs-de-sac). The design also creates good connectivity to the surrounding roads giving a variety of options for entering, permeating through, and exiting the block.

The proposal will be a staged development. As per the Subdivision and Landscape Concept Plan in Appendix A, the proposal has larger lots (5000m² +) adjacent to the roaded edge. Lot sizes then reduce to 3000m² in the centre of the site with larger 5,000m²++ lots are located along the State Highway edge and at the western and southern ends of the block.

Planting: The proposal includes buffer planting along the rural edge and along the boundary with State Highway One. Buffer planting will also be used along the boundary with the future wastewater treatment plant and the recycling centre. A species list for Buffer Planting is included in the Plan Change.

Proposed planting within the development will create a high-quality landscaped area and will reflect planting patterns that currently exist in the surrounding rural areas. Lengths of shelterbelt plantings are proposed within the road reserves along the fronts of larger lots (i.e. 5,000m²++). These shelter belts should be planted using deciduous and exotic columnar trees that require minimal maintenance to retain their form such as *Quercus robur* 'Fastigiata', *Liriodendron tulipifera* 'Helleri', *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* or *Cupressocyparis leylandii*. A species list for shelterbelt planting is included in the Plan Change which includes these species amongst others. The shelter belt plantings should be established as part of the estate works and typically located within the road reserves. Adverse shading effects of residential dwellings should be considered when deciding on the location for any shelter belt plantings as shown on the Concept Plan.

Street trees are shown grouped in small, irregular clusters. These should comprise 3-7 trees to reflect the more informal vegetation patterns of rural landscapes, compared with the regular avenue planting common in urban residential subdivisions. The Plan Change includes a species list for Clustered Street Trees.

Reserves: Given that the Holmes Block is in close proximity to the existing sports fields at the intersection of Brookside and Dunns Crossing Roads, the design does not propose any reserves. Instead a generous planted area in road reserve at the main entrance is provided, along with areas for feature planting at key intersections.

3.1 Visual & Landscape Assessment Methodology

In order to assess the visual nature and visual extent of the study area, a site visit and photographic study of the site and surrounding landscape was undertaken in August 2008 by Daniel Julian Senior Landscape Architect and Ian Craig Urban Design Manager from Harrison Grierson. A second site visit was undertaken by Amy Hobbs, Landscape Architect of Harrison Grierson, in January 2009 to familiarise herself with the site and the proposed plan change, as Daniel Julian had left the company and was unable to carry on with this work.

Viewpoint selection: Two representative viewpoints were selected to illustrate how visible the site is. These viewpoints are considered to be representative of the views available to residents and to the general public.

When reviewing these representative viewpoints the likely visual effects were identified with regard to the Preliminary Subdivision Concept plan. When assessing likely visual effects the following were taken into consideration:

- The extent to which the development may be visible within the landscape;
- The extent to which the proposed development may be integrated into the landscape;
- The characteristics of the development's foreground and background from the representative view points;
- The size and makeup of the viewing audience;
- The proximity of the viewing audience to the site and;
- The prominence of the development within each representative viewpoint.

3.2 Visual & Landscape Assessment

The locations of the representative viewpoints are shown on Figure 2 on the following page. The photos taken from the representative viewpoints are illustrated on page 5 (all photos were taken with a 50mm lens digital SLR Fujifilm Finepix S9500 Camera).

3.2.1 Representative Viewpoint Review

Representative Viewpoint One:

Existing Condition: This viewpoint looks west along Burnham School Road toward the western end of the Holmes Block. The existing site conditions include open pasture with immature coniferous shelter belt plantings running north-south across the site.

Proposed Rural-Residential Subdivision: The Subdivision and Landscape Concept Plan proposal locates lots of around 5,000m² along the Burnham School Road frontage, with irregular clusters of street trees along Burnham School Road and strong, linear shelter belt plantings running perpendicular to this road.

Representative Viewpoint Two: This viewpoint looks east along Burnham School Road across the centre of the Holmes Block. The existing site conditions include open pasture with immature coniferous shelter belt plantings running north-south across the site. The proposal includes lots of around 5,000m² along this road frontage, with irregular clusters of street trees along Burnham School Road and strong, linear shelter belt plantings running perpendicular to the road.

3.2.2 Assessment of Visual Effects

The landscape character of the Holmes Block will change with the proposal to develop the site into a rural residential area. The block is currently in open pasture, so the development, regardless of its form or the types of mitigation proposed, will result in a change in the visual character of the site. However, visual change does not necessarily result in negative visual effects.

Surrounding Landscape Character:

The landscape character of the adjacent land will also change over time. If Selwyn District Council's future urban limit proposals are adopted, Dunns Crossing Road will form the Western extent of Rolleston township. In due course urban development will occur along the eastern side of Dunns Crossing Road. The current rural character of Dunns Crossing Road will be replaced by an urban character on the eastern side. It is considered important to balance the urban development to the east of Dunns Crossing Road with a visual transition area on the western side, in order to blend the urban development into Rolleston's rural surroundings.

Acknowledging Existing Landscape Character:

It is considered important for the proposed rural residential development to retain elements of a rural character. The character of the development should be more rural than urban while functioning as a visual transition between urban and rural. Yard spaces, especially side yards, should be used to allow views between houses. Open fence types should allow views through and avoid compartmentalising the landscape. The development could also utilise rural road treatments such as a soft edges, minimal street lighting, grassed swale (instead of concrete kerb and channel) and clustered street trees (instead of regular street tree spacings typical of urban environments). These elements are common in rural settings, and would visually set the development apart from the neighbouring urban area arising from the potential urban expansion of Rolleston. If the above design techniques are adopted, the rural-residential development would form a visual transition between urban Rolleston and the surrounding rural area. It is noted that these concepts are included as either development controls or criteria or illustrations within the Plan Change.

State Highway One:

The proposal includes extensive buffer planting along State Highway One frontage in order to mitigate visual effects of the highway on the residents and to screen the development from the highway. There is also a requirement for a setback from State Highway One in order to avoid acoustic mitigation measures. As a result, buildings will be distant from the highway and once planting establishes it is expected that built development will not be visible from the highway. The viewing audience from State Highway One is large but they are passing the site at speed, and so will be viewing the site for a short time at an angle, and in many cases their attention will be directed toward the road. As a result it is considered that any possible visual effects on the users of State Highway One will be less than minor.

Dunns Crossing Road and Burnham School Road:

The character of Dunns Crossing Road will change significantly as a result of the proposal. To ensure that this change does not result in negative visual effects, it is considered important for the development to retain elements of rural character and incorporate rural character design elements as discussed above to form a visual transition between the future urban edge of Rolleston and the rural areas around it. This should include the provision of larger lots (5,000m²+) along these rural edges. A criteria calling for this is included in the Plan Change. Although the character of the site will change, the proposal will create a development of high visual quality with a rural appearance if appropriate design elements are adopted. Visual effects are considered to be less than minor.

Neighbouring Residents:

The land at the intersection of Dunns Crossing Road and State Highway One has been sub-divided into rural residential sections but none have yet been built on. To the south opposite Burnham School Road is Kandalla Stud, which is accessed from Brookside Road and there are no buildings on the Burnham School Road side of the block. To the west and south-west is land identified for current or future infrastructure such as the future wastewater treatment plant and the existing recycling centre. The proposal includes buffer planting to these facilities. As a result visual effects on neighbours of the Holmes Block are considered less than minor.



Figure 2-Representative Viewpoints 1 and 2



Photo 1: Representative Viewpoint One



Photo 2: Representative Viewpoint Two

4.1 Constraints and Opportunities

The following constraints and opportunities were identified from site investigations.

4.1.1 Constraints

- Rural views from surrounding roads and neighbouring properties are afforded over the site which is currently open pasture used for grazing animals. Proposed development, or attempt to screen that development, will detract from these open views.

4.1.2 Opportunities

- Rural residential development has the potential to be visually integrated with its surrounding landscape, provided detailed design includes elements of rural character.
- Although the proposal will result in a visual change to the existing character of the site, the proposal has the potential to be visually attractive if views to the rural landscape are retained and if design elements reflect elements of rural character.
- Rural residential development can provide a visual transition between future residential growth to the east of Dunns Crossing Road and the surrounding rural land to the west of the site.
- Views to the rural landscape can be retained along roads and between built form if the subdivision plan accounts for this.
- Shelter belt and screen plantings are common in the area and could be used to visually buffer parts of the development if required.
- The flat topography means only views of the site from surrounding roads and neighbouring properties will change.

4.2 Recommendations

The analysis undertaken in the visual assessment identified a series of recommendations that needed to be addressed in the Plan Change in order to avoid, remedy or mitigate any potential negative visual effects. The finalised Plan Change now includes Appendix 34 and/or controls or criteria addressing all of these as follows:

- Controls to encourage a rectilinear roading and subdivision pattern more typical in a rural area in the Selwyn District;
- Controls to require a transition in lot sizes, with larger lots at both the rural and road edges to the site;
- Controls to require the clustering of smaller lots (e.g. 3000m²+) so that they are grouped in the centre of the block and arranged to avoid long sequences of smaller lots so that the smaller lots are afforded views over either rural land or larger lots (e.g. 5000m²+) ;

The above three matters are included in the Plan Change as matters for discretion in the consideration of subdivision and the rectilinear road pattern is also included in the Outline Development Plan.

- Controls on building coverage in order to maintain an open character;
- Controls on side and front yard spaces to retain views between residences;
- Controls on fence types to allow views through fences and avoid compartmentalising the landscape with screen fences;

The above three matters are included in the development standards for permitted activity dwellings.

- Controls requiring rural road treatments such as:

- soft edge (not kerb and channel);
 - grassed swales (not piped drainage system);
 - no defined visitor parking on road verges (i.e. assume that visitor parking occurs on private sites so no need for wide roads or parking bays);
 - street trees in small irregular clusters, not formal avenues;
 - road marking to be kept to a minimum and to comply with traffic safety standards for rural-residential subdivisions;
 - shelter belt planting within road reserves;
 - street lighting reflecting rural character.
- Controls on planting and hard landscaping to reflect rural character.

The above matters are included in the Plan Change by way of the Outline Development Plan as per Appendix 34.

4.3 Conclusion

The Proposal

The subject site is currently zoned rural and is adjacent to the proposed urban limits of Rolleston town centre. The proposed development aims to form a visual transition between the urban area of Rolleston and the rural area to the west and south of the development. This visual transition will be achieved by locating larger lots at the periphery of the site, proposing design elements that characterise rural areas around Rolleston and retaining open rural views down roads and between vegetation and houses. Some design elements include rectilinear roading and boundary patterns, shelter belt plantings, rural road types, open fence treatments and clustered plantings along streets. These features will complement building controls such as specified side and front yard areas which aim to retain views between residences.

Visual Effects from Dunns Crossing Road and Burnham School Road

Views of the site from Dunns Crossing Road and Burnham School Road will change significantly, but the site edges of both roads will retain their rural character. The rural residential development's role as a visual transition between urban Rolleston and the rural areas to the west and south is particularly important as Dunns Crossing Road will form the future urban edge of Rolleston. The rural residential development should generally have high visual quality incorporating elements of rural character. Visual effects from both Dunns Crossing Road and Burnham School Road are considered to be less than minor.

Visual Effects from State Highway One

Visual effects on users of State Highway One will be less than minor. In this case the viewing audience is large but is passing the site at speed, so they will only be viewing the site for a short period and at angles (not front on). The requirement for buildings to be set back from the highway in addition to the proposed planting should mitigate visual effects of the rural residential subdivision. Visual effects from State Highway One are considered to be less than minor.

Visual Effects on Surrounding Residents

The urban expansion of Rolleston is already approaching Dunns Crossing Road in the vicinity of the Holmes Block, but these lots are generally yet to be built on. Other neighbours of the Holmes Block include Kandalla Stud (which has access from Brookside Road) and infrastructure facilities such as the recycling centre and the future wastewater treatment plant. Although the views from these neighbouring properties will change, the proposed development will retain elements of rural character and establish an attractive, visual transition between the future urban edge of Rolleston and the rural areas to the west and south. Visual effects from surrounding residents are considered to be no more than minor.

Summary of Report

Through the steps outlined in the visual assessment it has been possible to identify and determine the constraints and opportunities within the study area. From this analysis we outlined the recommendations that will assist in retaining elements of rural character and provide visual integration and visual attractiveness. The recommendations were adopted in the Plan Change and as such it is considered any potential adverse landscape and visual effects will be no more than minor.

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APPENDIX A

Preliminary Subdivision Concept Plan

Project No. 1021.127337.01
Drawing No. 127337-PSC1
Scale: 1:5000 at A3

HARRISON GRIERSON
CONSULTING ENGINEERS SURVEYORS PLANNERS

71 Great South Road Auckland Ph 09 917 5000 Fax 09 917 5001
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HOLMES BLOCK Subdivision and Landscape Concept

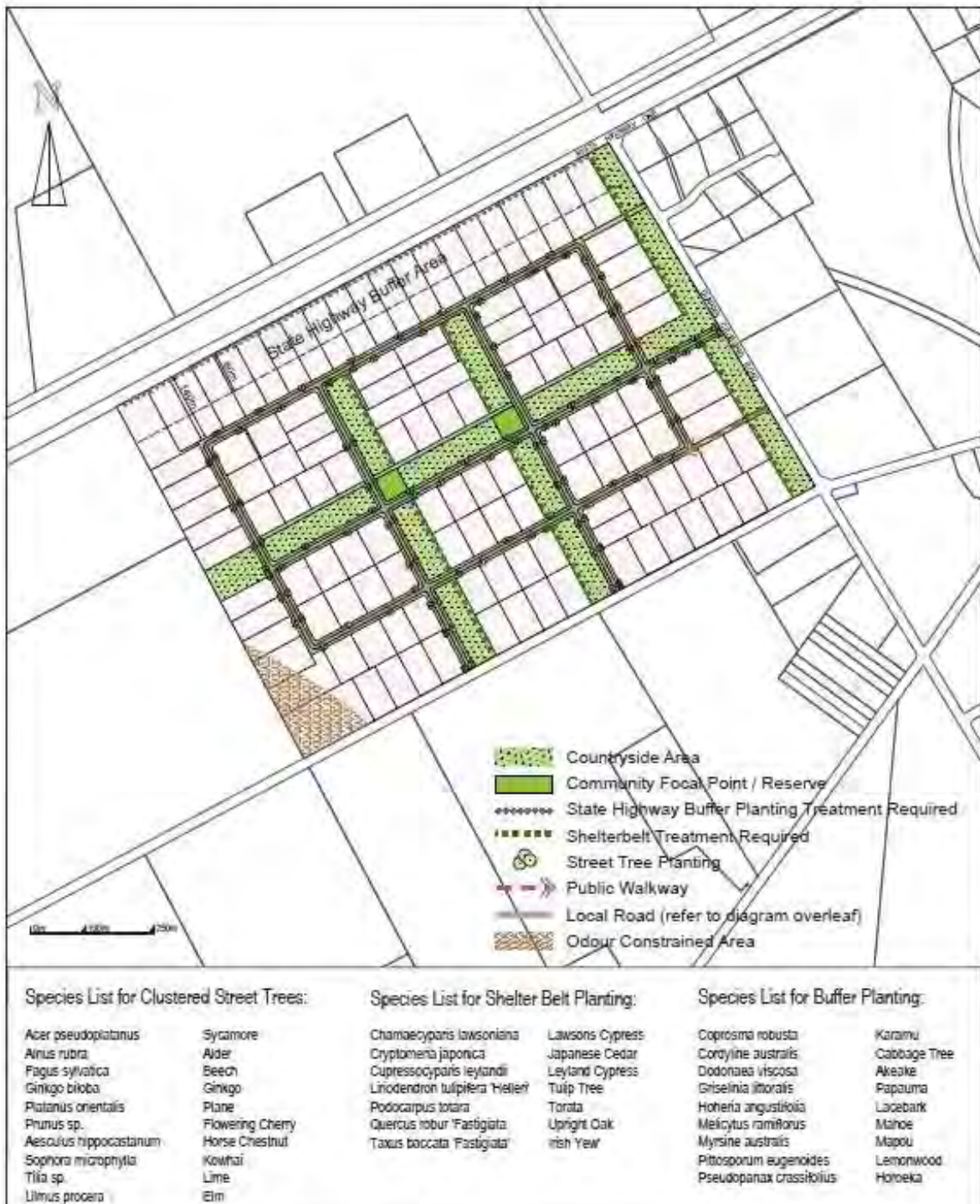
YIELD:
Total Lots: 160
Gross Area: 92ha
Net Area: 80.5ha (87.5%)
Average Lot Size: 5031m²

- PLANTING TYPES:**
- Feature Planting
 - Street Tree Planting
 - Buffer Planting
 - Shelter Belt Planting

Selwyn Plantation Board Limited
Land at Dunns Crossing Road
Rolleston
March 2008



OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN: HOLMES BLOCK



APPENDIX 2: PROPOSED OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN





-  Countryside Area
 -  Community Focal Point / Reserve
 -  Rural Buffer Planting
 -  Streetfront
 -  Street Tree Planting
 -  Public Walkway
- Scale: 1:5000@A3
- 
- Gross Area: 92.8ha
Total Lots: 128
Minimum Lot Size: 4000m²
Average Lot Size: 9357
Net Area: 86.87ha (72.7%)

PRELIMINARY SUBDIVISION AND LANDSCAPE PLAN RENDERED VERSION

Holmes Block
20 January 2010
Selwyn Plantation Board Limited
Land at Dunns Crossing Road, Rolleston

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APPENDIX 4: PRELIMINARY SUBDIVISION AND LANDSCAPE PLAN – RENDERED VERSION



PHOTOGRAPH 1: 180° panorama looking north from Burnham School Road adjacent to the entrance to the Resource Recovery Park



PHOTOGRAPH 2: 180° panorama looking into the site from Dunns Crossing Road adjacent to the existing site road entrance

APPENDIX 5: PHOTOGRAPHS



PHOTOGRAPH 3: 180° panorama looking south from Burnham School Road towards Brookside Road



PHOTOGRAPH 4: 180° panorama from the road verge immediately adjacent to the Chambers lot looking towards the site

APPENDIX 5: PHOTOGRAPHS