

# **ATTACHMENT E:**

**Landscape peer review**

# **Landscape Peer Review – Proposed Plan Change 2**

---

**PC080002 Coffey and Blake Private Plan Change**

**Prepared for Selwyn District Council by Andrew Craig**

February 2010

---

**Andrew Craig Landscape Architecture Ltd**

Poynton House

68 Oxford Terrace

Christchurch

Ph. 03 377 0157

Mob. 021 146 1092

PO Box 109

Christchurch 8140

## Introduction

The purpose of this report is peer review the following:

- Landscape assessment of environmental effects prepared in support of proposed private Plan Change 2 requesting the rezoning of existing rural zoned land to deferred Living (XA). I understand this will result in mixed density housing of 10 lots per hectare.
- The proposed plan change provisions where they affect landscape outcomes.

The landscape assessment accompanying the plan change application was prepared by Isthmus Group Limited (landscape architects) and is dated November 2008.

Also considered is the discussion of landscape effects within the proposed plan change application [Section 5 – 5.1 / 5.22] and the proposed provisions.

## Review of Landscape Assessment and Methodology

For any plan change landscape assessment methodology is informed by RMA Schedule 4. Additionally the relevant objectives and policies of the District Plan and those proposed by the applicant are also to be considered, as are RMA s32 matters.

Of relevance to landscape the following matters from Schedule 4 are to be considered and are commented on with regard to the landscape report.

### *1(a) A description of the proposal.*

The site has been described in sufficient detail to understand the character of it and its wider setting [Section 2]. The proposal is described [Section 4] in very general terms which appears to align with the ODP (which is not included in the landscape assessment). The proposed rules [Table 1: Zone Comparison Table] give sufficient indication of anticipated site density. Generic images of what is envisaged for the proposal would substantially assist in better understanding it, particularly with regard to potential visual and landscape effects.

Because it is a landscape matter a more detailed description of the rural and other zone boundary planting [4.5 second bullet point] proposed by the applicant should have been described in the landscape report and cross referenced to the ODP and proposed rules. Nonetheless, the rules (proposed Appendix 19) do give an appropriate indication of the type of planting to be carried out along these boundaries, although the location of the Kingcraft Development Area which is subject to this planting does not appear to be clearly identified on the ODP or any other maps. With regard to the proposed boundary planting an indication of how this will be maintained and by who will be useful so as give confidence that its purpose is enduring.

Overall the description of the proposal with reference to the ODP is sufficient to get a clear understanding, although this can only be fully appreciated with reference to the entire application document and proposed rules. Further, it is understood that at the subdivision consent stage more detailed landscape plans will be forthcoming, which is the appropriate time for these.

### *1(d) An assessment of the actual or potential effect on the environment of the proposed activity:*

The (adverse) visual effects are assessed as being predominantly low with respect to most existing neighbouring properties. Three dwellings are rated as being exposed to a high degree of visual effect. Some reliance however, is placed on the screening effects of existing tree and shrub planting within these properties [5.7 and 5.11 – also 5.15 in the Application report]. Nonetheless,

the assessment is reasonably balanced, although the change in outlook is clearly going to be radical where the landscape goes from rural to urban.

In the related discussion of amenity effects [5.14 – 5.17] the emphasis is on the proposal's compatibility with the existing urban environment that adjoins the application site rather than that on the rural landscape. The loss of rural based amenity (openness, greenery, tranquillity) is not addressed in any great detail in the consideration of amenity effects, and yet this is how neighbours will be most affected. In this regard, the effects of this merit further discussion.

Further assessment is given [5.24 – 5.26] with regard to recent development and proposed patterns in the Prebbleton area, where it is concluded that the proposal is consistent with these. This is particularly so concerning mixed density and the variety of land uses in the area. I agree with this observation. Relating to this I note that many submitters are concerned that the village like character of Prebbleton will be lost should the proposed subdivision proceed. There is probably some truth in this, but given future development scenarios advanced by PC1 and the Prebbleton Structure Plan, there is little that can be done to maintain the former scale that contributed to village character.

*1(g) A description of the mitigation measures...to be undertaken to help prevent or reduce the actual or potential effect:*

Mention is made of the 5m landscaped setback [7.1 - 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> bullet points] and again the question arises as to whether this is effectively a reserve or is reliance placed on future landowners to implement and maintain the required vegetation? If the latter is the case, then I am not confident the anticipated outcomes will be achieved in the long term, which will be discussed in more detail regarding the proposed Plan provisions.

Existing planning provisions are cited as a means of reducing future infill within the proposed low density area. In the landscape assessment it is not clear which provisions apply and the implication is that infill may be a prohibited activity, which is unlikely. I note that in the application further infill will be subject to rule 4.6.1 where proposals attract non-complying activity status.

Under the 'Connectivity and recreation' heading it is asserted that '*... no front fences shall be permitted closer to the road than the dwelling built onsite.*' There does not appear to be a rule implementing that outcome, although the applicant has indicated<sup>1</sup> that fencing up to 1.2 high will be permitted within the 4m road setbacks and alongside reserve and pedestrian pathway boundaries. This will be addressed latter with regard to the proposed provisions.

All other mitigation measures offered appear suitable given the context of the application site and the relevant statutory provisions.

*1(h) (of relevance) identification of the persons affected by the proposal.*

The public (roads) and private (neighbouring dwellings) vantage points offering views into the application site have been adequately identified [Section 3]. The degree of visibility is rated in the Figure 2 aerial photograph that accompanies the landscape assessment. Generally this part of the assessment is adequate.

*2(a) Any effect on those in the neighbourhood and, where relevant, the wider community including social-economic and cultural effects.*

*2(b) Any physical effect on the locality, including any landscape and visual effects:*

---

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to SDC from Aurecon dated 31.5.2010

2(d) *Any effect on natural and physical resources having aesthetic ....value for present and future generations.*

See comments regarding item 1(d) above. Otherwise I agree that the application site does not appear to have significant natural landscape features that would be adversely affected by the proposal.

### Section 32 Matters

Other matters to be considered arise from RMA s32, these being principally an evaluation of any Objectives, Policies and Rules proposed as part of the Plan Change request where they relate to landscape character and amenity outcomes. These are also subject to a cost / benefit analysis, which in landscape terms arise from anticipated change to the character and amenity of the application site. For example, the loss of rural outlook for existing residents would be considered a cost in landscape terms, where a benefit might arise from the remediation of adverse amenity effects caused by actual and potential rural activity.

These matters are not covered in the landscape assessment, but are addressed in the plan change application, although not with regard to landscape matters. Nonetheless, many of the points raised in the landscape assessment are expanded on in the Application and s32 discussion.

### Selwyn District Plan and RPS Matters

Finally, the proposed Plan Change also needs to be assessed against the District Plan Objectives and Policies where they are relevant to landscape matters. Of particular relevance are those concerning the growth of townships.

The RPS [4.8 – 4.9], PC1 [4.10 – 4.11] and Selwyn District Plan provisions where they relate to landscape outcomes [Section 6.0 and Appendix 2] are appropriately identified and briefly addressed. Further the landscape assessment also covers many of the concerns flagged by the Objectives and Policies. Despite the succinct discussion of these, it appears that overall the proposal will implement and achieve those Objectives and Policies relating to landscape matters. This becomes more apparent when the landscape assessment is read in conjunction with the Plan Change application.

### **Proposed District Plan Provisions**

The proposed District Plan provisions as listed in section 4 of the application will result in development that can be regarded in terms of its character and amenity as typical of most new subdivisions. Nonetheless a number of changes are recommended to the wording of the proposed provisions as follows. Deleted wording has strikethrough and recommended new wording is double underlined.

#### *Policy B4.1.4*

‘...and that development in the Living XA Deferred zone is consistent with the density provision of Chapter 12A of the Regional Policy Statement, and ~~has regard to~~ is compatible with the form and character of development in the adjacent living zones,...

#### *Explanation and Reasons*

‘...be consistent with the Regional Policy Statement, whilst ~~having regard to~~ being compatible with the form, and character and amenity of development of the adjacent living zones.

The reason for these suggested changes is that it is more specific and prescriptive. I also note that compatibility is a major concern to submitters.

#### *Rule 12.1.3.33*

Regarding this proposed rule a reference is made to the 5m setback along Kingcraft Drive Existing Development Area boundary. It would be clearer if this setback were labelled as such on the ODP.

#### *Rule 12.1.3.35*

'...Native shrubs shall provide under planting to this tree row and shall be spaced at no more than 3m centres and that this area is to be fenced along all boundaries.'

Note that fencing can be transparent and it is recommended that this comprises rural style post and wire.

The reason for this is to ensure adequate vegetative screening is achieved along the setback boundary, and that the location and extent of this area is demarcated so as to be readily identifiable for implementation and maintenance purposes.

#### *Rule 12.1.4.38*

This discretionary matter concerning demarcation of the rural / urban boundary looks as if it is going to be difficult to administer and does not appear to be all that enforceable (also see Rule 12.1.3.35 above). For it to be effective the 5m setback boundary planting really needs to occur within a reserve rather than rely on property owners to ensure the planting is implemented and maintained, especially in the long term.

#### *Rule 12.1.3.37*

In the Living XA Deferred Zone, any fencing within the street setback and along a boundary adjoining a reserve or pedestrian accessway shall be limited to a height no greater than 1.2m

As discussed, the landscape report states that no fencing is to occur within the street setback. There appears to be no proposed rule implementing that outcome.

Apart from the above no further amendments or additional rules are recommended.

## **Conclusion**

Generally the Isthmus landscape report is adequate, but is substantially bolstered by additional information provided in the Application prepared by Connell Wagner<sup>2</sup>. Nonetheless, some clarification is needed, particularly with regard to how the proposed 5m Kingcraft boundary is going to be administered.

As is the case with most residential subdivisions these days, confidence can be had that amenity will be high. The ODP and proposed rules would indicate that this would be the case with regard to the proposed plan change. It is acknowledged however, that the ODP is, as expected, very conceptual and that the subdivision plan will be substantially more detailed. The ODP appears to be generally sound, although (pedestrian) connectivity between cul de sacs and nearby roads

---

<sup>2</sup> now 'Aurecon'.

would be desirable. In any event, confidence can be had that overall amenity will be delivered in accordance with what can be expected for living zones and that the proposal will be compatible with surrounding land uses.

---

**Andrew Craig**  
**Landscape Architect**  
February 2010