

**BEFORE HEARING COMMISSIONER
FOR SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

UNDER

the Resource Management
Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER

Private Plan Change Requests
81 and 82 (PC81 and PC82)

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

URBAN DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE

August 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	4
2.	CODE OF CONDUCT	5
3.	SCOPE	5
4.	STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	6
5.	ROLLESTON	8
6.	CANTERBURY REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT & OUR SPACE	8
7.	ROLLESTON STRUCTURE PLAN	9
8.	CONNECTIVITY VERSUS ACCESSIBILITY	9
	PLAN CHANGE 81	11
9.	PC 81 PROPOSAL	11
10.	COMPACT URBAN FORM & CONNECTIVITY	12
11.	ACCESSIBILITY	13
12.	OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	15
13.	LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	15
14.	SUBMISSIONS	17
	PLAN CHANGE 82	19
15.	PC82 PROPOSAL	19
16.	COMPACT URBAN FORM & CONNECTIVITY	20
17.	ACCESSIBILITY	21
18.	OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	22

19.	LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	23
20.	SUBMISSIONS	24
21.	CONCLUSION	26

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My full name is Hugh Anthony Nicholson. I am a Director at UrbanShift which is an independent consultancy that provides urban design and landscape architecture advice to local authorities and private clients.
- 1.2 I hold a Post-Graduate Diploma of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Urban Design from the University of Sydney. I have more than twenty years' experience in both the public and private sectors. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA).
- 1.3 Prior to my current role, I worked as the Design Lead for the *Ōtākaro Avon River Regeneration Plan* for Regenerate Christchurch for two years, and as a Principal Urban Designer for Christchurch City Council for ten years. Before this I worked as an Urban Designer for the Wellington City Council for seven years.
- 1.4 I am a chair / member of the Nelson City / Tasman District Urban Design Panel and the Akaroa Design Review Panel. I was a member of the advisory panel for the development of the National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) for the Ministry of Justice, and a member of the Technical Advisory Group for the Wellington Waterfront.
- 1.5 My experience includes:
 - (a) Project leader for the establishment of the Christchurch Urban Design Panel which reviews significant resource consent applications and significant Council public space projects (2008);
 - (b) Project leader for *Public Space Public Life Studies* in Wellington (2004) and Christchurch (2009) in association with Gehl Architects which surveyed how people used different public spaces around the city centre, and how the quality of these public spaces could be improved;

- (c) Steering group and design lead for *Share an Idea* and the Draft *Christchurch Central Recovery Plan* including associated draft district plan amendments to the central city zones which were subsequently reviewed and incorporated into the *Christchurch Central Recovery Plan*;
- (d) Expert urban design witness for Christchurch City Council to the Independent Hearings Panel for the Christchurch Replacement District Plan on the Strategic Directions and Central City chapters;
- (e) Design reviewer for more than fifty resource consent applications for major central city rebuilds for the Christchurch City Council including the Justice & Emergency Precinct, the Central Library, the Bus Interchange and the Christchurch Hospital Outpatients and Acute Services Buildings.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 2.1 I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and that I agree to comply with it. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express, and that this evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 I have been asked by the Selwyn District Council to carry out a peer review of the landscape and urban design assessments provided as part of the applications for PC81 and PC82 including the responses to the Requests for Further Information. Where necessary I have provided additional comments on urban design effects in relation to the urban form of Rolleston, and commented on matters raised in submissions that relate to urban design or landscape architecture.

- 3.2 My assessment is focused on the urban design effects in relation to the urban form of Rolleston and does consider the urban form implications for Greater Christchurch which are addressed in Ms. White's evidence.

4. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- 4.1 In my peer review and in providing evidence I have drawn strategic direction on good urban form from three sources, the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (**NPSUD**), the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (**CRPS**) and the Operative Selwyn District Plan (**SDP**), all of which provide overarching guidance.
- 4.2 The **NPSUD** seeks to provide "*well-functioning urban environments*"¹ that enable more people to live near a centre or employment opportunities, and which are well serviced by public transport².
- 4.3 In particular the **NPSUD** promotes urban environments that provide good accessibility between housing, jobs, community services, and natural and open spaces, support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and are resilient to the likely effects of climate change³.
- 4.4 The **CRPS** seeks to manage the urban form and settlement pattern of Christchurch through the consolidation and intensification of urban areas.
- 4.5 The objectives of the **CRPS** direct that residential development should be of a high quality and incorporate "good urban design"⁴.
- 4.6 The **CRPS** also seeks housing developments that give effect to the listed principles of good urban design, and to those in the NZ Urban Design Protocol 2005. These principles refer to the need for well-integrated places that have high-quality connections including walking, cycling and public transport, and that are environmentally sustainable⁵.

¹ National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, Objective 1, p.10

² Ibid, Objective 3, p.10

³ Ibid, Policy 1, p.10-11

⁴ Ibid, Objective 6.2.3 Sustainability

⁵ Ibid, Policy 6.3.2 Development form and urban design

- 4.7 The objectives of **SDP** seek that *“growth of existing townships has a compact urban form”⁶*, and that a *“high level of connectivity is provided both within the development and with adjoining land areas”⁷*.
- 4.8 The policies in the **SDP** direct that zoning patterns should not *“leave land zoned Rural surrounded on three or more boundaries with land zoned Living or Business”⁸*, and that townships should be encouraged to grow in a compact shape where practical⁹.
- 4.9 Policy 4.2.10 in the **SDP** goes on to direct that new residential blocks should be *“small in scale, easily navigable and convenient to public transport services and community infrastructure such as schools, shops, sports fields and medical facilities, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists”¹⁰*.
- 4.10 Policy B4.3.77 for Rolleston requires development within Outline Development Plan (ODP) areas to address the specific matters in the relevant ODP. The explanation indicates that a Structure Plan has been prepared to facilitate the integrated growth of Rolleston, and that due the large amount of greenfield land within the urban limit it has been broken into a number of ODP areas which when taken together achieve the overall strategic outcomes sought for the township.
- 4.11 Drawing on the strategic directions outlined above I have reviewed the urban form proposed in PC81 and PC82 in terms of consolidation or the extent to which it creates a consolidated and compact urban form for Rolleston, and in terms of connectivity or the extent to which it supports accessibility to a range of services in and around Rolleston using a range of travel modes including walking, cycling and public transport.

⁶ Operative Selwyn District Plan (Townships Volume), Objective B3.4.4

⁷ Ibid, Objective B3.4.5

⁸ Ibid, Policy B4.3.3

⁹ Ibid, Policy B4.3.6

¹⁰ Ibid, Policy B4.2.10

5. ROLLESTON

- 5.1 Rolleston is the third largest town in Canterbury and situated 21 kilometres south of Christchurch. It has expanded rapidly since the Canterbury Earthquakes and a new library, health hub and high street will be completed in 2021. In my view the centre of Rolleston is located on Tennyson Street outside the new library, however, the key facilities in the town centre are spread throughout the central 400 metre ring shown in Figure 1.
- 5.2 Figure 1 shows 400, 800, 1,200 and 1,600 metre radius rings around the centre of Rolleston (approximately 1,200 metres to the edge of the town centre), and 400 and 800 metre radius rings around the smaller neighbourhood centres (including those proposed in PC82). These give an indication of walkable distances, although actual walking distances will be longer depending on the local network of roads and paths.
- 5.3 The walkable catchments provide an approximate measure of how compact the urban form is and to what extent the urban form enables walking, cycling and public transport as realistic alternatives to the use of private vehicles. I consider them to be one measure to assess the proposed plan change against Policy 4.2.10 of the SDP (as well as the various directions relating to consolidation and compactness).

6. CANTERBURY REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT & OUR SPACE

- 6.1 The Greater Christchurch Partnership (including Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury, Selwyn District Council, Waimakariri District Council, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, NZ Transport Agency and Canterbury District Health Board) adopted Our Space 2018-1048 as a strategy to guide land use decisions in a way that integrates with the transport and infrastructure plans of the partners. In particular the strategy:
- Makes provision for an additional 150,000 people by 2048;
 - Identifies locations for residential growth;
 - Promotes a compact urban form that takes account of transport investments, climate change and sea level rise.

- 6.2 The updated CRPS identifies new urban housing development areas in Rolleston, Rangiora and Kaiapoi consistent with the future development areas in Our Space 2018-2048 together with associated policy provisions to guide Selwyn and Waimakariri District Councils.
- 6.3 The PC81 and PC82 plan change areas sit outside the future development areas and are inconsistent with both Our Space 2018-2048 and the CRPS.

7. ROLLESTON STRUCTURE PLAN

- 7.1 The Rolleston Structure Plan 2009 was prepared in response to the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy 2008 which identified Rolleston as a south-western growth centre. The Plan was intended to facilitate the integrated growth of Rolleston Township and to accommodate an additional 5,375 households.
- 7.2 The Rolleston Structure Plan informed the development of a series of associated Outline Development Plans (ODPs) in the SDP, aimed at providing an integrated and strategic approach to residential growth in Rolleston. The PC81 and PC82 plan change areas sit outside the future development areas identified in the Rolleston Structure Plan and the SDP.
- 7.3 Subject to discussion about the suitability of the land for residential growth, I consider that the approval of PC81 and PC82 would be out-of-sequence with residential growth envisaged in the SDP and the Rolleston Structure Plan. In the following sections I have considered whether this out-of-sequence development could result in adverse effects for Rolleston.

8. CONNECTIVITY VERSUS ACCESSIBILITY

- 8.1 I refer to two separate urban design issues as part of my assessment of PC81 and PC82.

- 8.2 The first issue could be broadly termed ‘accessibility’ or ‘walkability’, and relates to providing access to public services and facilities¹¹ within easily walkable or cyclable distances. This is referred to in Policy 1 in the NPSUD which seeks good accessibility that supports a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and in Policy 4.2.10 of the SDP which seeks that new residential blocks should be convenient to public transport and community infrastructure particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 8.3 The second issue could be broadly termed ‘connectivity’ and relates to creating streets that are joined together in city-wide networks that provide more choices, and support increased resilience and safer places¹². Well-connected street networks are recognised as supporting walking and cycling. Policy 6.3.2 of the CRPS and Objective B3.4.5 of the SDP generally seek high levels of connectivity both within developments and with adjoining areas.
- 8.4 Good accessibility is not the same as a high level of connectivity. In theory the public services and facilities can be provided internally within a plan change area or provided along a single road outside the plan change area.

¹¹ *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol*, Ministry for the Environment, 2005, p.21

¹² *People Places Spaces: A design guide for urban New Zealand*, Ministry for the Environment, 2002, p.32

PLAN CHANGE 81

9. PC 81 PROPOSAL

- 9.1 PC81 seeks to rezone approximately 28.4 hectares of Outer Plains land for residential purposes, with an Outline Development Plan (ODP) guiding the form and layout of future development. The proposal seeks to establish a new Living MD zone in the district plan, which would give effect to the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS). If approved the Plan Change is envisaged to provide for approximately 350 new homes, although theoretically the MDRS could allow a significantly higher yield.
- 9.2 The ODP is designed to achieve an overall minimum net density of 12 households per hectare with areas of higher density (15hh/Ha).
- 9.3 In my assessment of PC81 I have reviewed the following documents:
- (a) Amended Request for Change to the Selwyn District Plan, Rolleston Industrial Developments Ltd, Dunns Crossing Road, March 2022;
 - (b) Attachment 5: Amended Section 32 Evaluation, Dunns Crossing Road, March 2022;
 - (c) Appendix E: Urban Design, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Skellerup South Plan Change, DCM Urban, October 2021;
 - (d) Attachment 1: Revised Outline Development Plan, Change 81 / RFI, Skellerup South;
 - (e) Attachment 2: Revised Outline Development Plan Text, Change 81 / RFI, Skellerup South;
 - (f) RFI Response – Private Plan Change Request 81, Novo Group, December 2021;
 - (g) Attachment 5: addendum Urban Design Assessment, People, Places and Spaces Assessment, A+ Urban Ltd;
 - (h) Submissions addressing urban design and landscape architecture matters from the following parties:
 - (i) PC81-0005 (Croucher)
 - (ii) PC81-0001 (M & J Douglas)

10. COMPACT URBAN FORM & CONNECTIVITY

- 10.1 In my view the Skellerup South Block would be an 'island' urban form surrounded on four sides by rural or rural lifestyle land uses. The rectangular block has a single side facing the future Rolleston settlement across Dunns Crossing Road (if PC70 is approved). By its nature this type of urban form with either no connected edges or a single connected edge is less compact and well connected than a block that is fully integrated on three or four sides. I note that future urban expansion into surrounding areas could mitigate this.
- 10.2 Currently the Skellerup South Block is surrounded by rural land uses. The land to the east, west and south is zoned Rural. The land to the north was proposed to be zoned for residential development through PC73 but as that request has been declined I have assessed PC81 against the current zoning which is Living 3 or rural lifestyle development. The land on the opposite side of the Dunns Crossing Road to the east is part of the PC70 plan change area which seeks to rezone the land for residential use as part of the Faringdon development.
- 10.3 If PC81 is approved in the best case (whereby PC 70 is approved also) I consider that the Skellerup South Block would have a low level of connectivity with Rolleston and would not contribute to a compact urban form, creating an urban 'peninsula' surrounded on two sides by land zoned for rural land uses and one side by land zoned for rural lifestyle use with a single urban frontage addressing Dunns Crossing Road. There is a risk in approving PC81 that PC70 will not be approved resulting in an even lower level of connectivity between the Skellerup South Block and the wider Rolleston township.
- 10.4 The revised ODP shows three connections with Dunns Crossing, the southernmost one of which is identified as a pedestrian crossing. In my opinion, even assuming the approval of PC70, this would provide a low level of connectivity with the Rolleston township. While the location of the pedestrian crossing would provide access to the proposed Faringdon commercial centre, it is also further away from the Rolleston Town Centre.

- 10.5 In my opinion PC81 would not contribute to a consolidated urban form and would have poor connectivity with Rolleston. These outcomes would not contribute to Objective B.3.4.4 of the SDP (or various directions relating to promoting a compact urban form and a high level of connectivity).
- 10.6 I note that there is the potential for PC81 to have better connectivity if the land adjacent to the urban 'peninsula' to the north was rezoned for residential use (as was proposed through PC73). While this option may have some merit I do not consider that it is the only option for the growth of Rolleston or that PC81 can rely on rezoning the surrounding areas of land in order to provide a compact urban form or good connectivity.

11. ACCESSIBILITY

- 11.1 I have compared the distance from each of the current plan change areas to the Rolleston town centre in order to provide an indication of their relative proximity. The measurements were made from the ODP primary road exit onto the existing street network that is closest to the town centre. Measurements were made along the existing road network to an indicative centre point on Tennyson Street outside the new library.

- 11.2 Table of distances:

Plan change area to town centre	Distance (kms)
PC70	2.9
PC75	2.9
PC64 SW	3.1
PC64 SE	3.1
PC76	3.2
PC73 Holmes Block (under appeal)	3.3
PC78	3.5
PC73 Skellerup Block (under appeal)	4.2
PC81 Skellerup South	4.7

- 11.3 While I do not regard the difference in distances as a conclusive guide to accessibility, it is one of a number of factors that is relevant. The Skellerup South Block is 1.2 kilometres further away from the town centre than the next furthest plan change area (excluding PC73 given that it was declined).
- 11.4 PC81 is outside the 1.0km average walk length, and the 4.0km average cycle distance identified in the New Zealand Household Travel Survey (NZHTS)¹³. Bearing in mind that only 1.3% of the total number of travel legs in the survey were cyclists then the percentage of the total number of trips legs that involved cycling more than 4.0km was closer 0.65%.
- 11.5 Based on the NZHTS it is unlikely that a significant number of people would walk or cycle from the PC81 plan change area to the Rolleston Town Centre regularly.
- 11.6 PC81, measured from the ODP primary road exit, is 2.2 kilometres from Lemonwood Grove School, 3.0 kilometres from West Rolleston Primary School, and 3.7 kilometres from Rolleston College. The Faringdon commercial centre proposed in PC70 is 1.2 kilometres away, but is not yet approved. The nearest recreational park with sports fields is 2.5 kilometres away at Brookside Park.
- 11.7 None of the public services or facilities identified above are within the average walk length identified in the NZHTS, and while they are within the average cycle length identified in the NZHTS, I note that the cycle trips would be along busy collector roads without continuous cycle infrastructure.
- 11.8 Potential alterations to bus routes in Rolleston to service the PC81 plan change area are identified in Figure 15 of the Integrated Transport Assessment¹⁴. I note that the potential alterations would be dependent on PC73 in terms of bus routes and viability, and do not consider that PC81 can rely on rezoning of adjacent land in order to provide good public transport outcomes.

¹³ New Zealand Household Travel Survey, Ministry of Transport, 2015-2018, <https://www.transport.govt.nz/statistics-and-insights/household-travel/>

¹⁴ Appendix D: Integrated Transport Assessment, 423 Selwyn Road, Rolleston, Novo Group, October 2021, Fig. 15, p.25.

- 11.9 In my opinion PC81 would have a low level of accessibility to public services and facilities as a result of poor walkability, difficult cycling conditions and a lack of public transport options. If a comprehensive commercial centre was developed as part of PC70, together with a more connected cycling infrastructure, I consider that the accessibility of PC81 could be improved to a low-moderate level.

12. OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 12.1 Once the eastern side of Dunns Crossing Road is fully developed further residential capacity may still be required in Rolleston, and the residential development of the Skellerup South Block could be part of an alternative growth option.
- 12.2 With this in mind I have reviewed the proposed ODP and recommend that if it is approved the north-south secondary road is extended on the ODP southwards to connect with the southern east-west primary road, and that a second pedestrian / cycle crossing facility across Dunns Crossing Road is shown on the ODP at the northernmost connection.
- 12.3 The revised ODP identifies road frontage upgrades along Dunns Crossing and Selwyn Roads. In my opinion these frontages should be identified on the ODP as requiring an urban upgrade with shared pedestrian cycle facilities, reduced speed limits and property accessways.

13. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 13.1 I have reviewed the urban design, landscape and visual impact assessment in Appendix E of the application prepared by DCM Urban (October 2021).
- 13.2 I agree with Mr Compton-Moen's description of the existing site character and values in paragraph 3.1 of his report.

- 13.3 I have used a seven point scale drawn from the NZILA's *Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*¹⁵ to assess the scale of effects of the Plan Change on the landscape character and the visual impact:

very low	low	mod-low	moderate	mod-high	high	very high
----------	-----	---------	----------	----------	------	-----------

- 13.4 In my opinion the effects of the proposed plan change on the landscape character from an open rural character to a residential subdivision would have a *moderate-high* impact reflecting the change from an open rural landscape with long views and a small number of built elements, to a suburban landscape with shorter views, enclosed spaces and a greater number of built elements. In forming this opinion I note that the surrounding areas have rural land uses.
- 13.5 I have reviewed Mr Compton-Moen's visual impact analysis and broadly agree with his description of the visual context as well as his selection of viewpoints and description of the views.
- 13.6 Bearing in mind that the visual impact of the proposal is a subset of the attributes that contribute to change in landscape character, in my opinion the visual impact from the viewpoints on Dunns Crossing Road and Selwyn Road would be *moderate*. In forming this opinion I note that under the current zoning shelterbelts and hedges are common landscape features in rural zones. I note that Mr Compton-Moen considers that the visual impact of the plan change from these viewpoints ranges from negligible to low.
- 13.7 While the mitigation measures proposed by Mr Compton-Moen may be positive features of the proposal, I do not consider that MM 1, 2, and 6 are mitigation measures for the landscape or visual impact. MM4 provides some mitigation for the on Selwyn Road but fails to address the community severance or lack of passive surveillance created by lack of access onto the road. MM5 and MM6 would be desirable outcomes but they are not

¹⁵ *Te Tangi A Te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*, (Final Draft), New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, May 2021, pp. 63-65

proposed to be implemented through the Plan Change and cannot be relied upon.

- 13.8 In my opinion the landscape character and visual impacts of the proposed plan change would not be changed by the proposed mitigation measures and would remain *moderate-high* and *moderate* respectively. I note that Policy 6 of the NPS-UD specifically directs that changes to amenity values such as landscape character and visual amenity need to be balanced against the positive effects of increased housing supply and choice, and are not, of themselves, an adverse effect.

14. SUBMISSIONS

- 14.1 Submission PC81-0005 (Croucher) suggests that the impact on 890 Selwyn Road has not been considered and that the Urban Design, Landscape and Visual Impact report incorrectly assessed the impact on 796 Selwyn Road.
- 14.2 The Urban Design, Landscape and Visual Impact report identifies and assesses viewpoints on the road outside 796 and 890 Selwyn Road. Table 2 of the report¹⁶ includes a specific assessment of the effects on the residents at 796 Selwyn Road, but does not specifically mention the effects on the residents at 890 Selwyn Road.
- 14.3 The residence at 890 Selwyn Road is approximately 250 metres away from the PC81 plan change area, and is screened from the area by a hedge on the eastern side of Goulds Road and a shelterbelt on the eastern side of Dunns Crossing Road.
- 14.4 While I consider that the visual impact on 890 Selwyn Road would be low given the distance of the residence from the site and the screening, I believe that impact on the landscape character of 890 Selwyn Road would be moderate reflecting the change from a rural to a suburban setting. I note

¹⁶ Appendix E: Urban Design, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Skellerup South Plan Change, DCM Urban, October 2021, Table 2, pp.13-14.

that PC70 if approved would have a greater effect on the landscape character of 890 Selwyn Road.

- 14.5 Submission PC81-0005 (Croucher) also suggests that the proposed ODP is contrary to the Rolleston Structure Plan which promotes higher density at nodal points, matching population density with centres of activity and high amenity.
- 14.6 While the Ministry for the Environment's urban design guide *People, Places and Spaces* suggests that as a principle higher density development should be promoted close to centres in order to support local communities, businesses and public transport¹⁷, I note that the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021 (Amendment Act) specifically directs that Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) shall apply in every relevant residential zone.
- 14.7 I am not aware of any qualifying matters within my area of expertise which would exempt PC81 from the MDRS.
- 14.8 Submission PC81-0001 (M & J Douglas) suggests that developing the PC81 area would take away the gradual buffer between the suburban, to the semi-rural, to the straight rural nature of the land that was intended for the betterment of the area and people of Rolleston.
- 14.9 PC81 seeks to extend the urban boundary of Rolleston and in doing so would move the urban-rural boundary further west. While Policy B4.1.3 of the SDP seeks to maintain the distinction between rural areas and townships, it does not rule out moving the urban boundary to allow growth.
- 14.10 PC81, if approved, is likely to detract from the amenities enjoyed by local residents, however, Policy 6 of the NPS-UD specifically directs that these changes to amenity values need to be balanced against the positive effects of increased housing and types, and are not, of themselves, an adverse effect.

¹⁷ People, Places and Spaces: A design guide for urban New Zealand, Ministry for the Environment, 2002, p.32

PLAN CHANGE 82

15. PC82 Proposal

- 15.1 PC82 seeks to rezone approximately 110 hectares of Rural Outer Plains land for residential purposes, with an Outline Development Plan (ODP) guiding the form and layout of future development. The proposal seeks to rezone the land as Living MD with two small commercial areas zoned Business 1.
- 15.2 The ODP is intended to achieve an overall minimum net density of 12 households per hectare with areas of higher density (15hh/Ha). Based on this density a yield of 1,320 houses could be provided across the site, although theoretically the MRDS could allow a significantly higher yield.
- 15.3 In my assessment of PC82 I have reviewed the following documents:
- (a) Appendix 2: Brookside Road Plan Change: Outline Development Plan including Narrative;
 - (b) Attachment 3: Brookside Road Plan Change: Urban Design Statement and Visual Assessment, A+ Urban, October 2021;
 - (c) Appendix 7: Brookside Road Plan Change: Integrated Transport Assessment, Stantec, October 2021;
 - (d) Appendix 13: Brookside Road Plan Change: Section 32 Assessment;
 - (e) RFI Response – Private Plan Change Request 82, Aston Consultants, January 2022;
 - (f) Brookside Road Plan Change: Revised ODP including Narrative;
 - (g) Brookside Road Plan Change: Character and Visual Impact Assessment – Peer Review, DCM Urban Design, December 2021;
 - (h) Submissions addressing urban design and landscape architecture matters from the following parties:
 - (i) PC82-0002 & PC82-0003 (Green)
 - (ii) PC82-0004 (McConachy)
 - (iii) PC82-0010 (Stonehenge Trust)
 - (iv) PC82-0005 (M. & J. Douglas)
 - (v) PC82-0009 (Woltersdorf)

16. COMPACT URBAN FORM & CONNECTIVITY

- 16.1 In my view the Brookside Road Block would be an 'peninsula' urban form surrounded on three sides by rural or rural lifestyle land uses. The irregularly shaped block has two thirds of its eastern edge facing the Rolleston settlement across Dunns Crossing Road. By its nature this type of urban form with a single connected edge is less compact and well connected than a block that is fully integrated on three or four sides. I note that future urban expansion into surrounding areas could mitigate this.
- 16.2 Currently the Brookside Road Block has rural or rural lifestyle land uses on three sides. The land to the north and east is zoned Rural Outer Plains. The land to the south was proposed to be zoned for residential development through PC73 but as that request has been declined I have assessed PC82 against the current zoning which is Living 3 or rural lifestyle development. The land on the opposite side of the Dunns Crossing Road is zoned Living Z with established stand-alone suburban houses.
- 16.3 If PC82 is approved I consider that the Brookside Road Block would have a low level of connectivity with Rolleston and would not contribute to a compact urban form, creating an urban 'peninsula' surrounded on two sides by land zoned for rural land uses and one side by land zoned for rural lifestyle use with a single urban frontage addressing Dunns Crossing Road.
- 16.4 The revised ODP shows four connections with Dunns Crossing Road, with pedestrian crossing facilities indicated at three of the intersections out of a total of 16 possible connections identified with surrounding areas. In my opinion establishing 25% of the potential connections (or four out of 16) would provide a low level of connectivity with the Rolleston township.
- 16.5 In my opinion PC82 would not contribute to a consolidated urban form and would have poor connectivity with Rolleston. These outcomes would not contribute to Objective B.3.4.4 of the SDP (or various directions relating to promoting a compact urban form and a high level of connectivity).

- 16.6 I note that there is the potential for PC82 to have better connectivity if the land adjacent to the urban 'peninsula' to the north and south was rezoned for residential use (as was partly proposed through PC73). While this option may have some merit I do not consider that it is the only option for the growth of Rolleston or that PC82 can rely on rezoning the surrounding areas of land in order to provide a compact urban form or good connectivity.

17. ACCESSIBILITY

- 17.1 I have compared the distance from each of the current plan change areas to the Rolleston town centre in order to provide an indication of their relative proximity. The measurements were made from the ODP primary road exit onto the existing street network that is closest to the town centre. Measurements were made along the existing road network to an indicative centre point on Tennyson Street outside the new library.

- 17.2 Table of distances:

Plan change area to town centre	Distance (kms)
PC70	2.9
PC75	2.9
PC64 SW	3.1
PC64 SE	3.1
PC82 Brookside Road	3.1
PC76	3.2
PC73 Holmes Block (declined)	3.3
PC78	3.5
PC73 Skellerup Block (declined)	4.2
PC81 Skellerup South	4.7

- 17.3 While I do not regard the difference in distances as a conclusive guide to accessibility, it is one of a number of factors that is relevant. The Brookside Road Block is 3.1 kilometres away from the town centre.

- 17.4 PC82 is outside the 1.0km average walk length, and inside the 4.0km average cycle distance identified in the New Zealand Household Travel Survey (NZHTS)¹⁸, bearing in mind that only 1.3% of the total number of travel legs in the survey were cyclists.
- 17.5 Based on the NZHTS it is unlikely that a significant number of people would walk from the PC82 plan change area to the Rolleston Town Centre regularly, however, it is a distance that is easily cyclable.
- 17.6 PC82 has two small commercial areas within the plan change area, and measured from the ODP primary road exit, it is 600 metres from West Rolleston Primary School and 3.0 kilometres from Rolleston College. The nearest recreational park with sports fields is on the opposite side of Dunns Crossing Road at Brookside Park.
- 17.7 A number of the public services or facilities identified above are within the average walk length identified in the NZHTS, and all of them are within the average cycle length identified in the NZHTS.
- 17.8 There is an existing bus route (5 Rolleston / New Brighton) which ends with a loop around Brookside Park on the opposite side of Dunns Crossing Road providing reasonable access to public transport from the PC82.
- 17.9 In my opinion PC82 has a moderate level of accessibility to public services and facilities. The primary reason for a lower rating is the internal distance of some of the houses from the ODP primary road exit. Some of the housing areas within the plan change area are more than two kilometres from the primary road exit.

18. OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 18.1 Once the eastern side of Dunns Crossing Road is fully developed further residential capacity may still be required in Rolleston, and the residential

¹⁸ New Zealand Household Travel Survey, Ministry of Transport, 2015-2018, <https://www.transport.govt.nz/statistics-and-insights/household-travel/>

development of the Brookside Road Block could be part of an alternative growth option.

18.2 With this in mind I have reviewed the revised ODP and generally support the proposed layout. However, I note that other reporting officers have raised concerns regarding the suitability of the odour constraint setback and that if this were increased it may have an impact on the proposed layout.

18.3 The revised ODP identifies a pedestrian / cycling route along Dunns Crossing Road frontage. In my opinion it should also include a pedestrian / cycling route along the Brookside Road frontage, and specify a proposed rural / residential interface treatment.

19. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

19.1 I have reviewed the urban design statement and visual impact assessment in Attachment 3 of the application prepared by A+ Urban (October 2021) and the peer review provided by DCM Urban (December 2021).

19.2 I agree with Ms Lauenstein's description of the existing site character and the receiving environment in Section 3.2 of her visual assessment.

19.3 I have used a seven point scale drawn from the NZILA's *Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*¹⁹ to assess the scale of effects of the Plan Change on the landscape character and the visual impact:

very low	low	mod-low	moderate	mod-high	high	very high
----------	-----	---------	----------	----------	------	-----------

19.4 In my opinion the effects of the proposed plan change on the landscape character from an open rural character to a residential subdivision would have a *moderate-high* impact reflecting the change from an open rural

¹⁹ *Te Tangi A Te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*, (Final Draft), New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, May 2021, pp. 63-65

landscape with long views and a small number of built elements, to a suburban landscape with shorter views, enclosed spaces and a greater number of built elements. In forming this opinion I note that the surrounding areas have rural land uses.

- 19.5 I have reviewed Ms Lauenstein's visual impact analysis. Bearing in mind that the visual impact of the proposal is a subset of the attributes that contribute to change in landscape character, I agree with Ms Lauenstein that the visual impact from the viewpoints on Dunns Crossing Road would be *moderate*.
- 19.6 In my opinion the visual impact of the proposal from the viewpoints on Brookside and Edwards Roads would be *moderate-high* reflecting that these stretches of road are currently entirely rural in character. I note that there are fewer potential viewers on these roads.
- 19.7 While the mitigation measures proposed by Ms Lauenstein may be positive features of the proposal, I do not consider that MM 1, 2, and 5 are mitigation measures for the landscape or visual impact. MM3, MM4, MM7, MM8 and MM9 would be desirable outcomes but they are not proposed to be implemented through the Plan Change and cannot be relied upon. MM6 is provided through the Selwyn District Plan.
- 19.8 In my opinion the landscape character and visual impacts of the proposed plan change would not be changed by the proposed mitigation measures and would remain *moderate-high* and *moderate* respectively. I note that Policy 6 of the NPS-UD specifically directs that changes to amenity values such as landscape character and visual amenity need to be balanced against the positive effects of increased housing supply and choice, and are not, of themselves, an adverse effect.

20. SUBMISSIONS

- 20.1 Submissions PC82-0002 & PC82-0003 (Green) suggest that land and house packages were purchased on Dunns Crossing Road for their semi rural aspect - not to be surrounded by high density houses.
- 20.2 Submission PC82-0009 (Woltersdorf) suggests that the area opposite the plan change area on Dunns Crossing Road has larger sections and a rural character which is enhanced by the undeveloped land on the south side of the road. They believe the proposed development would “destroy the character of the area”.
- 20.3 Submission PC82-0004 (McConachy) suggests that the proposed plan change will obstruct their view and affect the value of their property.
- 20.4 Submission PC82-0005 (M & J Douglas) suggests that developing the PC82 area would take away the gradual buffer between the suburban, to the semi-rural, to the straight rural nature of the land that was intended for the betterment of the area and people of Rolleston.
- 20.5 I consider that PC82, if approved, will detract from the rural character and visual amenities enjoyed by local residents as identified in these submissions, however, Policy 6 of the NPS-UD specifically directs that changes to amenity values such as these need to be balanced against the positive effects of increased housing supply and choice, and are not, of themselves, an adverse effect.
- 20.6 Submission PC82-0010 (Stonehenge Trust) supports the residential expansion of Rolleston in principle, but asks that measures are taken to reduce the impact of residential activities on the rural activities south of Edwards Road. The type of measures are not specified.
- 20.7 I note that concerns about potential reverse sensitivities between rural and residential land uses are commonly raised in response to requests to rezone land around Selwyn District. In most instances the width of the road (and this case the sealing of the road surface) and a proposed rural /residential

boundary treatment (low open style rural fencing and tree planting in PC82) are considered to be acceptable solutions in other parts of Selwyn District.

21. CONCLUSION

- 21.1 PC81 and PC82 sit outside the future growth areas identified in the Rolleston Structure Plan and subsequent planning documents including the CRPS, SDP and Our Space 2018-2048, and in my opinion are out of sequence. The plan change areas would be 'peninsula' urban forms surrounded on three sides by rural and rural lifestyle land uses.
- 21.2 In my opinion in the best case scenario (whereby PC81 and PC70 are both approved) the Skellerup South Block would have a low level of connectivity with Rolleston and would not contribute to a compact urban form, creating an urban 'peninsula' surrounded on two sides by land zoned for rural land uses and one side by land zoned for rural lifestyle use with a single urban frontage addressing Dunns Crossing Road. These outcomes would not contribute to Objective B.3.4.4 of the SDP (or various directions relating to promoting a compact urban form and a high level of connectivity).
- 21.3 There is a risk in approving PC81 that PC70 will not be approved resulting in an even lower level of connectivity between the Skellerup South Block and the wider Rolleston township.
- 21.4 In my opinion PC81 would have a low level of accessibility to public services and facilities as a result of poor walkability, difficult cycling conditions and a lack of public transport options. If a comprehensive commercial centre was developed as part of PC70, together with a more connected cycling infrastructure, I consider that the accessibility of PC81 could be improved to a low-moderate level.
- 21.5 In my view PC82 would have a low level of connectivity with Rolleston and would not contribute to a compact urban form, creating an urban 'peninsula' surrounded on two sides by land zoned for rural land uses and one side by land zoned for rural lifestyle use with a single urban frontage addressing

Dunns Crossing Road. These outcomes would not contribute to Objective B.3.4.4 of the SDP (or various directions relating to promoting a compact urban form and a high level of connectivity).

- 21.6 In my opinion PC82 has a moderate level of accessibility to public services and facilities including the town centre, commercial areas, schools and recreation facilities. I note that some of the housing areas within the PC82 plan change area are more than two kilometres from the primary road exit reducing the accessibility level to moderate..
- 21.7 In my view there is potential for PC81 and PC82 to have a better urban form and connectivity if adjacent land was rezoned for residential use (as was partly proposed through PC73). While this option may have some merit I do not consider that it is the only option for the growth of Rolleston or that PC82 can rely on rezoning the surrounding areas of land in order to provide a compact urban form or good connectivity.
- 21.8 In my opinion if additional residential or business capacity is required in Rolleston a more comprehensive and strategic approach would allow the costs and benefits of alternative growth options to be assessed and discussed with the wider community. A 'first-come-first-served' approach through private plan changes does not allow alternative options for growth to be assessed and compared in a comprehensive manner.
- 21.9 If PC81 is approved I recommend that the following additions are made to the ODP:
- The north-south secondary road is extended southwards to connect with the southern east-west primary road
 - A second pedestrian / cycle crossing facility across Dunns Crossing Road is shown on the ODP at the northernmost connection.
 - Road frontage upgrades along Dunns Crossing and Selwyn Roads are identified on the ODP as requiring an urban upgrade with shared pedestrian / cycle facilities, reduced speed limits and property accessways

21.10 If PC82 is approved I recommend the following additions are made to the ODP:

- A pedestrian / cycling route is included along the Brookside Road frontage;
- The proposed rural / residential interface treatment is specified.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'H' and 'N' joined together, enclosed within a square border.

Hugh Anthony Nicholson





August 2022

Figure 1: PC81 & PC82 400m Walkable Catchments

Information has been derived from various organisations, including Environment Canterbury and the Canterbury Maps partners. Boundary information is derived under licence from LINZ Digital Cadastral Database (Crown Copyright Reserved). Environment Canterbury and the Canterbury Maps partners do not give and expressly disclaim any warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of the information or its fitness for any purpose.

Information from this map may not be used for the purposes of any legal disputes. The user should independently verify the accuracy of any information before taking any action in reliance upon it.

Legend

-  Existing centres 400m walkable catchments
-  PC82 centres 400m walkable catchments
-  Proposed centres 400m walkable catchments
-  PC81 & PC82 Plan Change Areas

