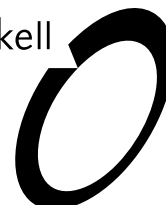


30 October 2020

Liz White
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Boffa Miskell



Dear Liz,

**Plan Change 66: Area Plan Change - Business 2A Zone – Landscape and Visual Effects
Peer Review**

Thank you for the opportunity to peer review the '*Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment for the proposed Business 2A Zone Area Plan Change*', (referred to as The Assessment) which has been prepared for Rolleston Industrial Developments Ltd by Novo Group and dated October 2020.

We understand that this is an application to Selwyn District Council for a Private Plan Change (Plan Change 66) to change the operative Selwyn District Plan (SDP). The applicant seeks an extension to the existing Business 2A Zone (B2A Zone) at Maddisons Road, Rolleston adjacent to the IPort.

The purpose of this review is to assess the landscape related information within the lodged documents to assess the merits of matters raised in the application. The focus has been on the potential landscape and visual effects and has reviewed the following documents:

- '*Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects*', prepared by Novo Group Ltd, dated 09 September 2020;
- '*Proposed Outline Development Plan*', prepared by Novo Group Ltd, dated 09 September 2020; and
- '*Section 32 Evaluation*', prepared by Novo Group Ltd, dated October 2020.

This peer review outlines high level comments on the Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment. It responds to the following questions in relation to the Landscape and Visual Assessment:

1. Is the methodology adopted to assess landscape and visual effects appropriate?
2. Are the best practice guidelines used the most relevant?
3. Are the assumptions regarding the development scenario reasonable?
4. Is the description of the receiving environment reasonable? Is there anything obviously missing?
5. Is the mitigation proposed appropriate and the scale to which this reduces adverse effects?
6. Is there any other information required to inform the landscape and visual assessment?

The application is currently zoned Rural Inner Plains in the SDP. The proposal is to overlay a Business 2A Zone for an undeveloped paddock (The Site) immediately adjacent to the IPort industrial area in northern Rolleston¹.

An Outline Development Plan (ODP) has been prepared for the Site. This is consistent with the ODPs of the surrounding Business 2A Zones. The ODP includes provision for landscape treatments required at the rural-urban interface and an indication where key road connections are to occur. This landscape is proposed to the north and east boundaries alongside the rural-residential area.

A Site visit to the Site and surrounding context was undertaken by the Peer Reviewer on 24 October 2020.

Appropriateness of methodology and Use of Best Practice Guidelines

The table of contents within the Assessment comprehensively includes all necessary items and outlines the methodology used under Section 1.0. The Assessment states that the methodology, including the effects assessment and rating scale aligns with the NZILA Landscape Assessment Guidelines and other best practice guidelines. Further information is contained within Appendix C.

Visual simulations were not prepared to accompany the Assessment, nor are they considered necessary to determine the landscape and visual effects of the proposal. The Site and context at a wider and local scale is well described in the Assessment with a better understanding of the Site coming from the use of Aerial Images and Site Photography in conjunction with narrative within the report.

The author of the Assessment states that several Site visits were undertaken, which assisted in better understanding the Site's character and visibility.

The Assessment clearly sets out the brief, methodology and receiving environment. The policy framework under the Operative Selwyn District Plan is referenced and an assessment of landscape character effects and visual effects are also clearly outlined. Following this, design and mitigation aspects are covered.

Overall, it is considered that the methodology is comprehensive and follows best practice.

Statutory Context

The Landscape Assessment gives a brief overview of the Selwyn District Plan in particular Matters in relation to the Township Volume, Part B.

Appendix 3 - Methodology

Within Appendix 3, two tables are presented. The first table, named 'Effects Analysis' lists the 'Pigeon Bay criteria', their equivalent grouping name within the Assessment and their meaning. The second table outlines the effects rating scale.

Table 1 is helpful to better understand how the author has grouped the terms under the Pigeon Bay criteria, however this doesn't clearly translate through to the assessment that has been undertaken. It is considered that this table, whilst helpful to understand how landscape aspects have been organised, is not necessarily required for this assessment. Typically, these would be used for assessments for areas that are considered to be within an 'Outstanding natural Landscape or Feature' under Section 6(b) of the Resource Management Act. Nonetheless, this work has been completed and it provides a useful guide for

¹ This IPort site is currently zoned Business 2A under the Selwyn District Plan

assessment. Utilising such a method does mean that double ups may be encountered (i.e. legibility/ perceptual or sensory effects can be closely aligned with Visual Effects). A simpler outline for a Site not in a noted landscape overlay would be:

- Landscape Character Effects
- Visual Effects

Including any statutory material to be reviewed and assessed.

Table 2 attempts to equate the RMA Planning terms of 'less than minor', 'minor' and 'more than minor', to the NZILA recommended 7-point rating scale. Unfortunately, the NZILA uses emotive terms such as 'extreme' in its suggested wording. Recommended best practice now suggests that the 7-point scale is termed as following: 'very high; high; moderate-high; moderate; moderate-low; low and very low'. This will hopefully become clear once the NZILA releases its Landscape Assessment Guidelines document, which is, we understand, close to becoming finalised².

The equivalent scaling of RMA terms against the 7-point effects scale, appears a little confusing. It is difficult to comprehend how a 'Moderate' effects-based scale rating could equal 'minor' under the RMA. This was echoed in a recent Environment Court decision³, where the decision stated:

'we had some difficulty with the proposition that the term moderate equated to minor, particularly when regard is had to the definition of moderate contained in the scale that the word means "Average in amount, intensity, or degree". The word "minor" is one which has some significance in RMA proceedings, particularly in light of the provisions of s 104D(1)(a) RMA. We understand the word to mean lesser or comparatively small in size or significance⁴. We consider that conflation of the two words would be contrary to the understanding of many persons as to their meaning and certainly contrary to our understanding'.

A suggested format could be the below.

Very Low	Low	Mod-Low	Moderate	Mod-High	High	Very High
Less than Minor		Minor	More than Minor			

It is recommended that the author of The Assessment could revisit this and reconsider the effects rating or provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the RMA planning terms relate to the seven-point rating scale.

Assumptions based on the Development Scenario

An Outline Development Plan (ODP) has been prepared illustrating potential likely development that could occur on the Site. The Assessment identifies that the area for the Plan Change is dependent on a number of factors (such as operational, expansion etc) and that the assessment is based on visibility and context rather than built forms⁵. In order to

² NZILA Presidents Message 29 October 2020: *'We have had more progress of the Landscape Guidelines in October, with another Peer Review Group workshop with the authors held on 21 October. The authors are incorporating another round of feedback from the workshop while we are planning the engagement phase with the membership..... possibly followed by workshops with the main Branches. We are confident that we will have a refined set of Landscape Assessment Guidelines to share very soon'.*

³ [2018] NZEnvC 78 Zhi Li, Jing Nui and Weili Yang an ors v Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Inc ('Okura' decision)

⁴ *Bethwaite v Christchurch City Council* Decision C085/93.

⁵ The Assessment, September 2020 paragraph 7

assess built form, the assessment relies on the B2A Zone to the west / southwest for 'comparison' purposes.

It is not clear from the assessment what the full range of potential effects of the proposed scale / bulk / height/ site coverage of built forms would be under the B2A zone (as per chapter C16 B Zone Buildings) or if the assessment was undertaken on the building parameters as outlined in Rule 16.6.2 of Township Volume. A description and 'worst-case' assessment against this must be outlined within the Assessment.

Description of Receiving Environment

Chapter 3 of the Landscape Assessment describes the receiving environment, in terms of its character context, local landscape and the Plan Change Site itself. The descriptions appropriately describe the character of the Site, particularly noting the changing emerging character of the area with the development of the inland Industrial Port and the LPC sites.

Overall, the description of the receiving environment appears comprehensive and accurate.

Mitigation Recommendations

The proposal will create a large new land use change to the area, that will be evident from a reasonable distance. The Assessment /ODP identifies 'ODP Controls' and proposed planting areas to maintain rural amenity values, reduce any potential for reverse sensitivity and assist with the integration into the wider landscape character.

There is little detail provided in the ODP or the Assessment as to what the 'Landscape Treatment Area 1' or 'Landscape Treatment Area 4' consists of, why they are different and what ODP 'controls' are proposed. Through research, it is understood that the proposed landscaping will comply with the subdivision requirements as set out in 24.1.3.13 of the Selwyn District Plan. These rules specify requirements around species, height at maturity and heights at time of planting⁶.

Overall, it is considered that these requirements are sufficient to mitigate the identified adverse landscape and visual effects and sufficiently deal with the rural-urban interface.

Any other information required?

The assessment has provided a review of relevant policies within the Township Volume of the operative Selwyn District Plan. It appears that relevant policies have been referred to, however, as noted above, it is considered that the Assessment needs to undertake a further assessment of the full range of effects of the proposed scale / bulk / height and site coverage of potential built form on the Site, particularly in relation to the parameters as outlined in chapter C16 of the Selwyn District Plan. This 'worst case' assessment will enable the full effects of the proposed Plan Change to be understood.

Yours sincerely

BOFFA MISKELL LTD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Bentley', with a stylized circular mark at the beginning.

James Bentley

Senior Principal Landscape Architect

⁶ In this instance Landscape Treatment 1(Trees achieving minimum height of 6.5m) and Landscape Treatment 4 includes (Trees achieving minimum height of 8m)