

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE: EDWARD HAMILTON

8 AUGUST 2023

My name is Edward Hamilton. My family home is next to the proposed sub-division but one (being beside the old Methodist Church) at 403 Whites Road, we are less than 100 metres away.

A quick flash back on my background:

I have been very privileged to have lived in Ohoka for most of my life. I have always tried to maintain an active role in the community. In the early days I was the President of the Ohoka Tennis Club and was very involved with the Mandeville Sports Club development. I bought out my father and took over the running of the Ohoka Service Station in the late 80's. I served several years on the Oxford Eyre Community Board. I took on the Chair of the Ohoka Domain Advisory Group and continue currently in that role. I was the key instigator of the Ohoka Bush development and I am still heavily involved in its' operations. I am a past president of the Ohoka Hall Committee and I am still a member. I am also on the Ohoka Residents Association committee.

In summary I have always worked hard within the Ohoka Community to make it a better place to live and raise a family.

With reference to my submission:

1. I can-not see in any way that PC31 could possibly compliment, enhance or add amenity value to the Ohoka Village. In fact quite the opposite, it will destroy all of this.
2. Our narrow country roads will be choked with vehicles. There will be major light and noise increase/pollution. A large greenspace (the farm land) that borders the village will be lost. This farm gives Ohoka a lot of its rural charm. Much of the wild life that we love so much will be forced out.
3. In relation to the loss of premium farm land. I am well aware of the pressures on our farmers coming from many directions. But New Zealand has only a small limited area of prime flat land available. I say limited because we aren't making anymore and once it's gone, it's gone. Our Primary Industries keep New Zealand 'afloat' and our dairy industry is right up there at the top whether we choose to like or hate dairy. At the end of the day most of us consume dairy products in high volume. We need to protect our high quality land and our farmers. Unfortunately this doesn't appear to be the case at present and may well come around to bite us in the future.
4. Commenting on flood risk has already been done to death so hopefully everyone has got the message that Ohoka is a very wet area. I would like to just add a couple of points that I haven't heard mentioned yet.

There are two issues at play here. First you have the heavy rain fall events 75mm+ in 24 hours or less which causes surface flooding like the recent July '23 event. But then we also have the ground water/under-current. This ground water pressure comes from heavy rain in the foothills of the Oxford catchment. We get this with the La Nina weather pattern.

These patterns seem to go in 7 to 10 year cycles. The Whites Road Pit is the perfect indicator for where the Ohoka Ground water sits (currently almost to the top). But will also remain completely dry for many years through an El Nino cycle.

So when we have high ground water/under-current pressures and a heavy rain event, this is when we get the worst of our flooding.

The land in question (Sherriff's Farm) currently works like a huge sponge, absorbing, holding and slowing the run off in a large rain event. A sub-division would raise the land, increase and speed up water shed and therefore, increase dramatically, the down-stream flood risk. Retention ponds, bunkers and tanks will never be big enough to contain the amount of water required. When we get over 100mm of rain in a 24 hour period or less the streams, creeks and ditches are full past capacity and can-not cope. With climate change these events are becoming a regular occurrence and more intense.

5. Part of Ohokas' special amenity and beauty are the narrow roads; tree lined in places that tend to naturally slow vehicles down. Widening these roads to cater for the proposed massive increase in traffic will detract from the special character of Ohoka and also encourage further through traffic.
6. With regards to the storm water/sewerage. The Mandeville/Ohoka sewer line now only has very limited capacity left on it so another sewer pipe would be required. Think of the disruption to the road users while another line is constructed. This could be months, years? This is why we should be building around the existing infrastructure of Rangiora and Kaiapoi.

Again, the burden falls on the rate payer. We have seen this with the ground water/under current issues from the Clearview Lane/Mandelea/Sandona/Millfield/Redfern Lane/No.10 Road & West Denbie Lane subdivisions. With all of these subdivisions the ground water was ignored with swales filled in or altered and dug through. The result has been years of flooding issues and millions of dollars' worth of remedial work by the Council, paid for by the rate payers. Ie. the large canal dug along Bradleys' Road, also major drainage work in San Dona subdivision and widening and deepening the ditch along Whites Road etc. The perfect example of how retention ponds don't work in high ground water years is the Wards Road/Dawsons Road pond which remained full for many months in 2022.

7. Re: Housing. I think David Nixon (for ORA) and Mary Sparrow did an excellent job covering this and I fully support their submissions. We need to be in-filling Christchurch city especially the central city area and make sure our existing towns are at capacity before we create more sprawl over prized farmland.

The Medium Destiny Residential Standards Act gives us the best ability to do this and it will be the best vehicle to provide New Zealand with more affordable housing going forward, without the loss of valuable farm land.

8. Carbon foot print. Further to this, there will be major infrastructure required outside of the proposal with storm-water upgrades, sewer lines and road widening. There would be thousands of cubic metres of fill and concrete carted in to Ohoka and this could go on for years. This would be a very negative outcome for the local residents.
9. The proposal definitely doesn't reflect those opinions of the local community, given there were 619 submissions strongly opposed to the proposal in its entirety.
10. Loss of Species. What is going to happen to all the chemicals and detergents when you get 800 house-holds waking up on a lovely Saturday morning and they decide to wash their cars and their boats? The answer is, it will make its way into the Ohoka Streams and then into the already polluted Kaiapoi River killing aquatic life along the way.

In closing, as mentioned, I have had the privilege of being brought up in Ohoka, spending most of my life here. I now have older children who are considering where they might choose to live and I know Ohoka is very high on their wish lists, but what they are looking for, is definitely not an urban type environment. We need to protect and preserve our rural villages for the next generations who wish to live here and care for this type of special environment for the future. Surely they should be allowed to have this choice.

I vehemently oppose the Private Plan Change legislation in the RMA as it totally undermines the planning and processes of our District Councils and it puts huge undue stress on our communities. It also undermines the democracy of all New Zealanders.

Finally, I would like to note that there has been no consultation between RIDL and the Ohoka community. I am guessing this is part of their game plan but find it quite extraordinary.

I therefore request, along with the other 619 submitters against Private Plan Change 31, that you as the Commissioner decline this application.

Thank you for your time.