

Statement of Sarah Barkle on behalf of the Oxford/Ohoka Community Board.

Introduction

1. My full name is... Sarah Kaye Elizabeth Barkle
2. I am the deputy chair on the Oxford/Ohoka Community Board
3. I have lived in the Waimakariri District for over 40 years. I grew up in North Canterbury, particularly within the outer fringes of Rangiora. I now reside with my family in Swannanoa. This is my second term on the community board so I have connections with residents across the ward. I have a degree in Geology from Canterbury University and had a particular interest in water and hazard management. Relevant groups I have been and currently involved with are: Ohoka/Mandeville Rural Drainage Advisory Group, Water Race advisory group, Cycle and Walkway Network Driving Group, Waiamakariri Integrated Transport Strategy driving group. As deputy chair of the Oxford/Ohoka Community Board, it is my responsibility to represent the community and their views.
4. Oxford/Ohoka Community Board submission covered the following topics:
 - Drainage, stormwater and flooding;
 - Water supply;
 - The proposal to deal with wastewater;
 - The power grid;
 - The local roads and transport generally;
 - The amenity and 'feel' of Ohoka;
 - Impacts on local schools;
 - Potential reverse sensitivity effects on rural community members;
 - The consistent and supported views of the local community as expressed in existing planning documents;
 - Impacts on Ohoka heritage;
 - Potential to upset ecological restoration works.

Summary

In terms of the technical information and expert advice, we would like to align our support with those of the Waimakariri District Council and Environment Canterbury. What we will be talking about in our summary is a selection of points that we feel are important from the local residents perspective whom have the hands on, real life expertise and knowledge of their area.

Drainage, Stormwater and Flooding:

Firstly, I would like to take your attention to the hazard maps supplied by the applicant which I have attached in Appendix A.1 and A.2. If you have a look you will see two road boundaries, Tram Rd and No10 Rd, in a triangular shape that I have highlighted in green. Here you will see on Map A.1 an area with no overlay, indicating no hazards or concerns for the development of this land. Then if you look at map A.2 you will see no flooding hazards indicated for a 1:200 return period flood. Now take a look at the photos in section A.3 and you will see the reality is much different. These are photos taken in the July 2022 flood event. This area is affected by a resurgence path. Where water that is usually flowing underground comes to the surface and flows above the ground. This is not uncommon in the Swannanoa, Mandeville and Ohoka areas. Unfortunately for this area it is an annual event, they get flooded on a yearly basis. Yet the maps indicate no problem at all. Locals warned of this area being unsuitable for development at the time it was proposed however modelling said otherwise. Ground water flows and resurgence channels are a highly complex system in this area with many variables affecting them. There is no modelling that takes all these into account yet they are incredibly crucial factor for determining flooding risk here. The most reliable resource in this instance is the local knowledge.

The reason I give this example is to show that modelling doesn't always get it right, especially in the Swannanoa, Mandeville, Ohoka area. That it is paramount, particularly with this proposal, that you listen to what the locals have to say, hear the consistencies in their accounts and give them some weight in the decision making process.

Ohoka is well known as a wet, damp and boggy location. As we have heard in expert evidence, particularly from Mr Victor Mthamo, the groundwater is often near surface level and the soil structure does not allow for a great deal of permeability or drawing down of water. Instead you get a combination of a high level of surface impermeability, soils that are saturated and a ground water system driven by upstream flows which increase the water table to points where it comes to the surface. In essence, the ground is getting watered from above and below. The localized undercurrent and resurgence systems (what the locals often describe as rivers and streams that pop up and flow), the impermeable soils as well as increased duration and intensity of rainfalls are all essential factors that need to be involved in accurate hazard modelling of this area. From what I understand, the modelling systems are not so complex which once again stresses the importance of listening and taking into account local knowledge which is based on reality and real-life experiences over generations.

Mr Mcleods evidence on the most recent flooding event based on his observations from a drive around, seemed to place a significant amount of blame on the lack of drain and swale maintenance for the flooding. Whilst I am sure there is a small degree of localized spill over due to this, to say that this is the culprit of most of the flooding seen in Ohoka is very simplistic and a perplexing conclusion. If these flooding events were simply because of lack of maintenance from private property owners in Ohoka, then wouldn't that be a simple fix. This to me just highlights the lack of local knowledge and understanding of the highly complex water cycle that exists here. Experts relying on desktop studies are mis-lead by what is reality due to the insufficiencies in the modelling.

Also, interesting to note that in one of the locations that suffers from frequent flooding – Wilsons Drive, the developer put in a very similar swale system to that which is proposed by the current developer in the PC31 area. A system that has consistently failed over the years.

I am a member of the Ohoka/Mandeville Drainage advisory group. As part of this we are talking about initiatives that educate land owners about stream maintenance and plantings which support local ecology. I think it is somewhat misdirected to say that those who own farms or lifestyle blocks that have streams, river or drains flowing through them do little to enhance the ecology, that they will leave them as unkept grasses verges. This may have been the case in the past but there is far more of an appetite now for these land owners to appropriately plant along waterways. The ecological value that the proposal is offering is nice however the built urban environment far negates this addition. Educated land owners also have the ability to plant out areas with support from ECan, WILs and Fonterra initiatives. There are discussions about plantings lists being developed specific to locations to assist land owners on selecting the right plants for their area and how to do this so that ecology and water quality becomes more self-sufficient and less need for in stream maintenance. To say that the proposed plan change would have higher ecological value than the alternative 4ha blocks is very assumptive.

The infrastructure that will be required to service this plan change across 3 waters and roading is significant. This is a cost that will ultimately be born by the ratepayers. It is quite simply an uneconomical and nonsensical use of resource.

The Local Roads and Transport

The reality of this proposal is that it is typical urban sprawl, it is disassociated and disconnected development. You can try and twist the reality, sugar coat the obvious or put on the rose-tinted glasses but the fact still remains that this proposal does not meet the objective of being of a well-functioning urban environment nor does it even stretch to contribute to one. It is simply a classic example of disconnected urban sprawl. Most interactions and connections that households need to make will be outside of this environment and will require vehicle movements to get there.

As a member of the cycle and walking network driving team, I have some knowledge of the extent of the networks that were proposed and the reality of their implementation. A

district wide cycle and walking network strategy was established and consulted on last year. I am a firm believer of connected peri-rural environments through these means. However, the reality is the cost to do so is extremely high and the roading is not necessarily capable of supporting such connections in their current states. For the cycle and walking network plan to be realized will take a huge amount of investment through rate payer funding and partnership with Waka Kotahi. This is simply out of reach for now. I note that the applicant has tried to use this as a sweetener to the deal by saying that they would provide cycleways that otherwise would not happen. That is a nice touch however the reality is that it will not connect Ohoka to any district wide network as this is currently a pipe dream.

The Amenity and 'Feel' of Ohoka

It has been mentioned numerous times that this proposal will not have a great deal of impact on the rural character of Ohoka. The simple fact is an additional 850 households will elevate the population significantly, by near on 700%, this will have a significant impact on the feel of Ohoka. The token mitigating factor of a hedge around the subdivision is not going to hide or reduce the extra hustle and bustle that will be generated by the addition of this many more people into the area.

As has been mentioned, Ohoka has its own policy within the District Plan, section 18.1.1.9, its purpose to protect the amenity and character of Ohoka. Under this section, it specifically says that lot sizes should be low density with *'lot sizes averaging 0.5 – 1.0 hectares'* or 5000 – 10000m². The policy also states that *'It is important that any further rural residential development occurs in a way, and to an extent, that does not overwhelm the special semi-rural character of the settlement.'* In-fact the only part of this proposal that pays any attention to the policy at all is that the commercial area will be located on the corner of the proposed urbanise zone so that it effectively acts as a town centre in relation to the other parts of the existing settlement.

The suggestion that a polo ground would anchor the rural nature of this urbansied area is a particularly odd concept. The proposed development is for an urban environment. The people who would be moving into this area would be on residential, urban sized sections. In what way would a polo ground be of any benefit or attraction to them? Perhaps a better location for such a facility would be at the Mandeville Sports Centre – an already existing hub of a wide variety of sporting clubs located down the road at Mandeville.

Schools offer a special connection to a community and reflect the character of an area. If a second school was to be created behind the hedge in 'Ohoka Estate' I would argue that it would create a further divide within the community. There would be those who lived behind the hedge and those who lived on the other side. I cannot see how this situation would promote any kind of whole community connectivity.

The consistent and supported views of the local community as expressed in existing planning documents

The applicants' case has mentioned that people should have a choice to buy an urban section in Ohoka but equally people should also have a choice to buy within a rural settlement or lifestyle block area. By developing Ohoka into an urban environment whether it has apparent rural character or not, is taking this option away from people and not keeping with the direction of policy 18.1.1.9. If this area was developed it forces people to look further out into greenfield spaces to find their preferred place again. Ohoka has been earmarked as rural lifestyle zone for a reason, urban development belongs alongside existing urban areas so that these lifestyle zones are not pushed out further afield.

The need for future housing and the types of housing being pushed by the applicant seems to be based on the want of the current average middle-aged demographic. The applicant has not considered the thoughts of our youth – our future house occupiers. Urban design should not just follow the same pattern as it always has. It needs to change so that our centers are the well-functioning urban environments that the NPS-UD intends them to be. This concept requires a mind shift and it needs to be supported by developers. Areas like Ohoka need to stay as the option for those who want a lifestyle block, urban development needs to remain as close to current centers as possible and include infilling. I have been involved in a number of working groups that are looking to future development. These have involved conversations with youth and what their expectations on transport and urban growth should look like. Home affordability and environmental factors are top of mind for these generations. They are welcoming of the concepts of living within a higher density urban center, close to amenities, less need for private car ownership. Add in elderly to the move intensified area so that they are more connected to their active community as an alternative to the classic house on a section and retirement village. A shift in thinking may not come from the current middle-aged population but don't discount the thoughts of our youth.

Consultation

The applicant has been very loud in voicing their disappointment in engagement with experts. I would like to loudly say that the applicant has made no effort to engage with the local community, the very people who this affects. There is a well-known resident group, there have been public meetings. At no point has the applicant tried to engage with the very people that matter or address their concerns.

Conclusion

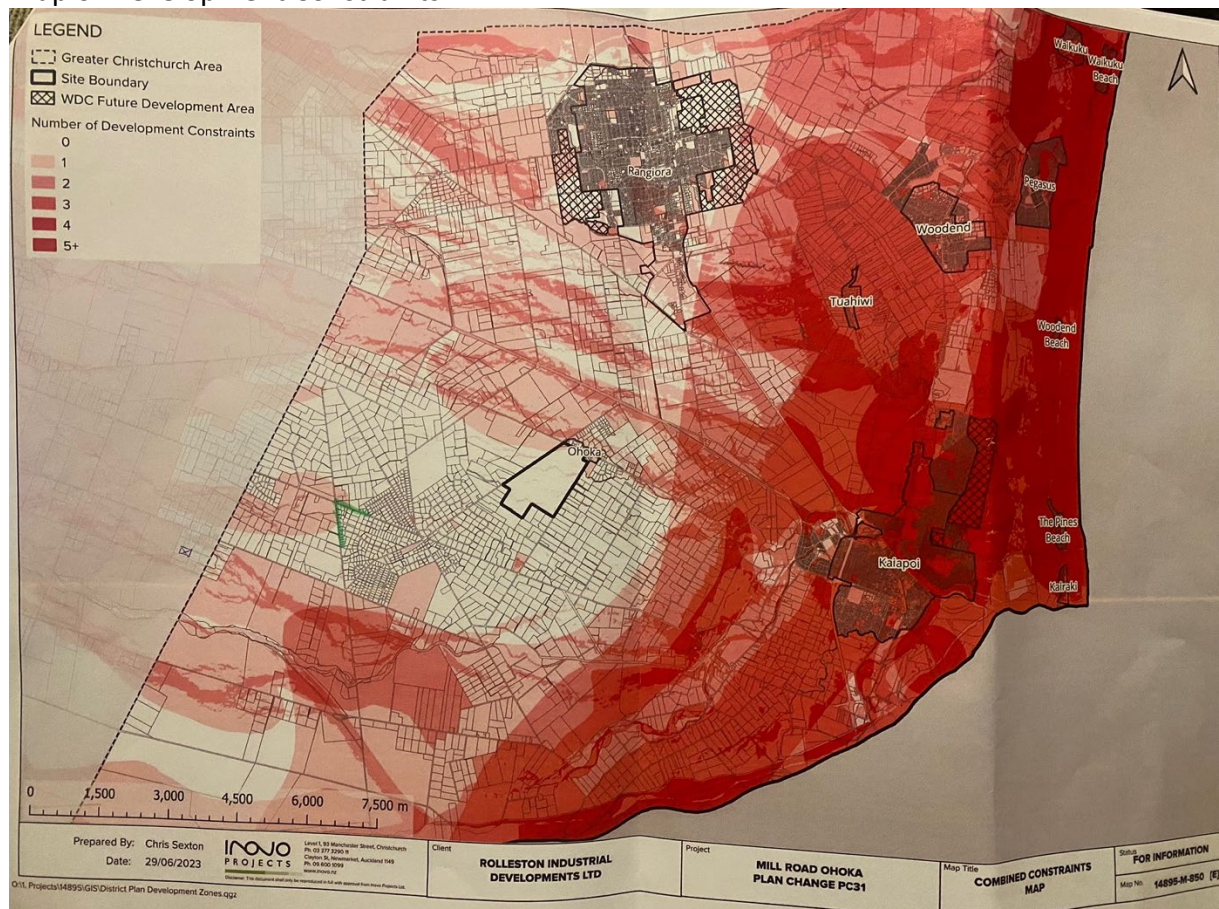
If you are to take anything away from what we have said today, please remember to listen to the locals' accounts, they are reality not desk top modelling. This modelling is particularly irrelevant as it does not take account the complex resurgence and ground water channels that are a significant feature of this area.

Think for the future needs of urban development rather than repeating the same patterns. Its time developers start thinking for the future, being the drivers of change and providing well-functioning urban environments.

Don't be disillusioned by the ability for land owners to enhance in stream ecology. Consider the extra costs to the ratepayers that will unnecessarily be inherited by this disjointed proposal and for a proposal that the ratepayers clearly do not support.

Appendix A.1

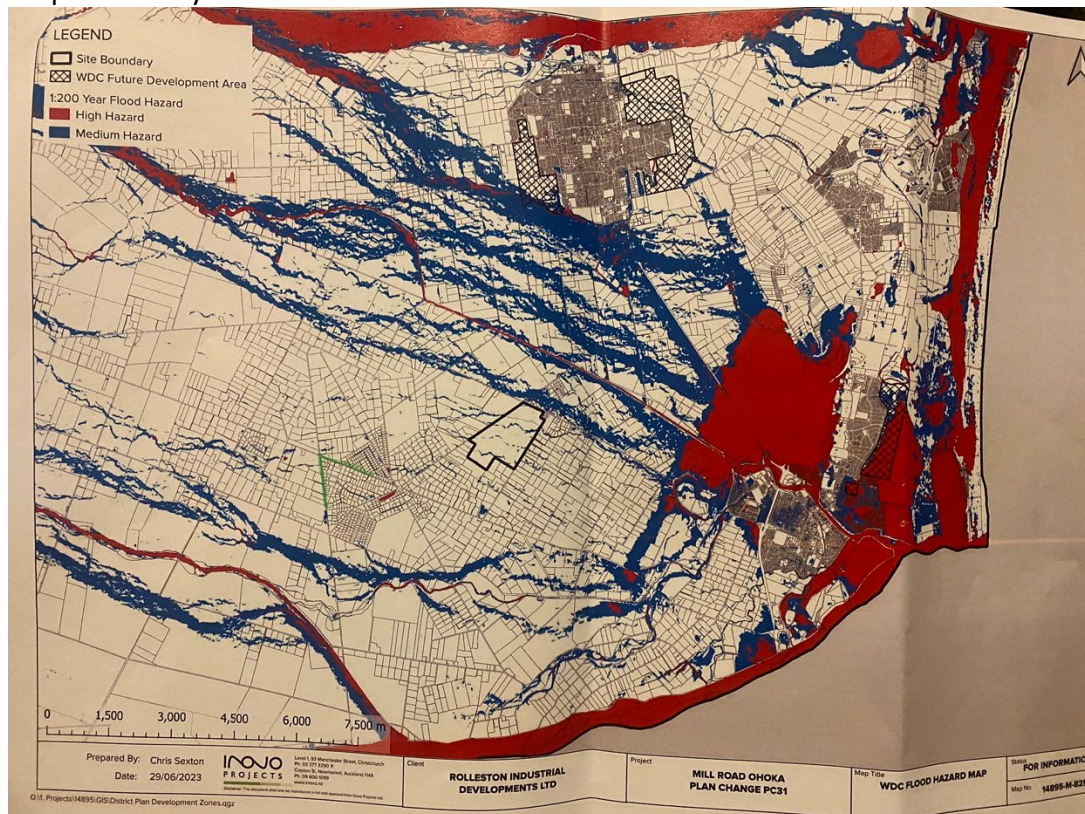
Map of Development Constraints.



This map indicates that there are no development constraints for the development east of the green lines.

Appendix A.2

Map of 1:200 year Flood Hazards



This map indicates that there is no level of flooding expected in this area in a 1:200 return period flood.

Appendix A.3

A series of photos taken in the 2022 flooding event at this precise location.



Roscrea Place - closed for 2 weeks.





McHughs Rd









