

HEARING SUBMISSION TO PC31

My name is Helen Mary Sparrow. I have an MA (Hons) in Political Science from Canterbury University.

In 1979 my late husband and I moved to a property known as “Newlands” some 5mk west of the Ohoka Village on the corner on McRoberts and Dawsons Road. We actively farmed this property until the mid-1990s. From then until I sold it in 2021 it was leased for dairy support.

I have taken an interest in planning for the Ohoka area since the early 1980s when I was involved with the development of the Ohoka Federated Farmers submissions to the Eyre County Scheme.

In the 1990s I worked extensively with the Waimakariri District Council's Forward Planning Team as they prepared the District's Proposed District Plan. I was particularly involved with developing surveys to identify the community's amenity values including defining rural character. I was also involved with the establishment of the plan standards for the District's small settlement.

From 2001 to 2015 I worked for the Waimakariri District Council, initially as a policy planner, then as a policy analyst, and I was its principal policy analyst when I left the organisation. Among the major projects that I was involved with while working for Council were the development of the District's flood hazard management strategy in conjunction with Environment Canterbury in the early 2000s, and the preparation of the revised rural chapter of the Proposed District Plan (Variation 8). I also represented the Council on the Officials Group for the Canterbury Water Management Strategy, and then provided officer support for the Waimakariri Water Zone Committee once it was established.

For a short period after I left the Council, I worked on contract with Environment Canterbury's Technical Team while it was developing the plan for the Waimakariri Water Management Zone.

After leaving the Council I spent a few months the Council's Ohoka Drainage Area Advisory Group, and I left it when I sold my property and moved to Rangiora two years ago.

I have set out my three reasons for opposing PC31 in my initial submission that:

- it is contrary to the current planning framework,

- the proposed development would compromise the amenity values of the Ohoka village to an unacceptable extent, and
- there is a likelihood of the development will create significant further drainage difficulties for people farming land to the east of the area involved with PC31.

I have briefly reviewed the Planners' opinions regarding the implications of PC31 for the amenity values of the Ohoka area. My main concern with respect to these assessments is that there does not appear to be a clear view about what constitutes a "rural village". I consider a working definition of a village is "a small cluster of dwellings with some ancillary buildings and including small scale services surrounded by open space".

The original Ohoka settlement saw two very discreet developments towards the end of last century in the shape of Mill Stream and Wilsons Drive which had no impact of the general rural amenity of the area. From my perspective the Ohoka village represents a model rural village in a peri-urban setting and should not be compromised by the proposed development.

If PC31 proceeds, it will involve a substantial large lot urban development stretching from the Ohoka village to San Dona, which would further exacerbate a pattern of development at can only be described as "rural sprawl". This is a description that I am first aware of having been used with respect to the Mandeville area by the late Professor Emeritus Wally Clarke, a very acute observer of development in the District during the 1990s and early 2000s.

Another issue that has been dealt with extensively by the planner for the applicant is how the long term allocation of dwellings for the District under the Greater Christchurch planning framework will be accommodated. I think it is important to recognise that the projections on which these are based are not predictions and are based on a relatively narrow range of assumptions. The pattern of growth between 2013 and 2018 censuses reflects most of the post-earthquake movement of people into the Waimakariri District.

I find the interest by the proponents of PC31 in trying to find areas within the District to accommodate the allocation interesting on two counts, neither of which supports the notion that the area that is the focus of this hearing must be used to meet this quota. For much of the time I was working for the Council we were being wrapped over the knuckles by the Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury with the charge "naughty Waimakariri you are growing too fast". At the same time these organisations had clear aspirations for the intensification of residential development around the centre of the City.

I do not go into the City very often now, but when I do, I am interested to see the large open areas of carparking managed by Wilson. I do not think it is appropriate to sanction the use of an inappropriate area for residential development in the Waimakariri District before we see significant residential development in the central city.

If there is a need to find an area for a major new urban development in the Waimakariri District I am reminded of the ideas circulating in the Forward Planning Unit prior to the emergence of the proposal for a new town at Pegasus. An area which was seen as a possible location for a new town in the District to parallel Rolleston as it took shape, is on the South Eyre Road to the west of Two Chain Road. That option remains open but given current views about intensification as the preferred option for urban development should never be needed. It, nevertheless, represents a possibility and a reasonable rebuttal to the argument that the area involved in PC31 must be used to meet the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy quota for the Waimakariri District.