

Before the Hearing Panel
Appointed by the Waimakariri District Council

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of a hearing on submissions on the proposed Waimakariri District Plan

Hearing Stream 12: Rezoning

Ravenswood Developments Limited

Submitter number 347

Evidence of Ian Colin Munro

26 March 2024

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Introduction

- 1 My name is Ian Colin Munro. I am a self-employed urban designer.
- 2 I have the qualifications of a Bachelor of Planning (Hons); a Master of Planning (Hons); a Master of Architecture [Urban Design] (Hons); a Master of Environmental Legal Studies (Hons); and a Master of Engineering Studies [Transportation] (Hons). I am a Full Member of the New Zealand Planning Institute.
- 3 I have 24-years of work experience and in that time, I have worked across the country. My experience has included a number of instances of new (or revitalised) urban centres. This has included work for both Councils and developers. Examples of medium-to-large green-field urban centres that I have been involved in the planning of include:
 - (a) Albany, Auckland;
 - (b) Massey North, Auckland;
 - (c) Hobsonville Village, Auckland;
 - (d) Auranga (Drury), Auckland;
 - (e) Five-Mile, Queenstown;
 - (f) Three-Parks, Wanaka;
 - (g) Mangawhai Central, Kaipara;
 - (h) Rotokauri, Hamilton; and
 - (i) Peacocke, Hamilton.
- 4 I have been engaged by Ravenswood Developments Limited (**RDL**) to provide evidence in relation to urban design matters, as relevant to RDL's submission seeking rezoning and related provisions to enable development of the Ravenswood Commercial Area. I understand that RDL is seeking an outcome consistent with the rezoning of the Ravenswood Commercial Area previously approved through Plan Change 30 (**PC30**) to the Operative Waimakariri District Plan.
- 5 I was also engaged by RDL in relation to PC30, but was not involved in the initial preparation or lodgement of the plan change. I was engaged after the period of public submissions had closed. My brief was to consider and respond to matters raised by the Council as a submitter and in terms of the s42A report, including an assessment of additional PC30 provisions volunteered by RDL.

- 6 Following release of the Council's decision and filing of RDL's appeal, I undertook expert witness caucusing with the urban design consultant engaged by Council, Mr. David Compton-Moen, to review a revised set of provisions developed and agreed by RDL and Council. Mr. Compton-Moen and I reached agreement and this was communicated to the Court by way of a Joint Witness Statement.
- 7 I have now been asked to review the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan (**PWDP**) rezoning provisions proposed by RDL. I am satisfied that those provisions, as they relate to urban design matters, are consistent with the approved PC30 outcome.
- 8 I maintain my assessment that the proposed rezoning is appropriate from an urban design perspective.

Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses

- 9 While this is not a hearing before the Environment Court, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2023 and that I have complied with it when preparing my evidence. Other than when I state I am relying on the advice of another person, this evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

Scope of evidence

- 10 My evidence provides a summary of:
 - (a) Key urban design features of the Ravenswood Commercial Area proposal;
 - (b) The assessment of urban design issues (as agreed between myself and Mr. Compton-Moen through PC30);
 - (c) My assessment of PWDP provisions proposed by RDL.

Key urban design features of the Ravenswood Commercial Area

- 11 The key urban design outcomes proposed, and which have been particularly important to my support of the Ravenswood Commercial Area, are well summarised in the Business 1 Zone (Ravenswood) Environmental Results Expected established via the Court's Consent Order:
 - a) *Development into an attractive, high-quality, and pedestrian-oriented town centre over time.*
 - b) *Building position and orientation determined by its proximity to roads, internal vehicular and pedestrian linkages and the principal shopping street frontage and its relationship with public open space.*

- c) *Building design measured by façade modulation, activation of front façades, and minimisation of blank walls to create a high quality urban environment.*
- d) *Safe access to and across the adjacent road network with reference to future transport patterns.*
- e) *Safe, integrated, and convenient pedestrian connectivity between buildings, sites, and public open space, including parking areas, for people of all ages and abilities.*
- f) *Establishment of a principal shopping street and prominent town square/reserve as key elements of the character and amenity of the new town centre.*
- g) *Parking and loading facilities are located and designed in a manner that does not detract from the streetscape or impair pedestrian access.*

12 The methods selected to achieve the above outcomes were focused on the use of an urban design assessment of development (Rule 31.25.4), and a spatial Outline Development Plan (158A).

Urban design assessment

13 As recorded in the Joint Witness Statement (**JWS**) for the PC30 appeal (20 October 2022), urban design experts for RDL and Council agreed that an appropriate outcome had been reached as follows:

9 *We have read the updated plan provisions and amended ODP, in including in particular amended Policy 18.1.1.12 and the matters of discretion outlined in Rule 31.25.4, and are in agreement that the modifications satisfy all urban design concerns that had been previously raised, with sufficient detail regarding structural elements to manage the potential urban design effects of development through the resource consent process that will apply. In particular:*

(a) *Main street / Principal Shopping Street:*

- (i) *Policy 18.1.1.12(e)(i)) requires provision of a Principal Shopping Street as a focal point for the town centre within a pedestrian focussed environment.*
- (ii) *ODP158A shows a Principal Shopping Street adjoining the Town Square. Pedestrian linkages, Bob Robertson Drive to the north, Taranaki Stream to the south and linkage to the east and west, provide a high degree of connectivity across the site.*

- (iii) *When considering grant of resource consent, relevant matters of discretion include that the Principal Shopping Street provide a retailing and pedestrian focus where parking and loading do not visually and physically dominate the area (rule 31.25.4(j)), and the location of buildings immediately adjacent to the principal shopping street (rule 31.25.4(b)(iii)). Other relevant matters include integration with the Town Square (rule 31.25.4(l)), and a range of design and appearance matters to provide a degree of certainty that a high quality design outcomes are able to be considered in subsequent development proposals (rule 31.25.4(b)).*
 - (iv) *We recognise that other Business 1 areas in the district have permitted activity standards that require buildings on the Principal Shopping Street to be located up to the road frontage. The development of the Principal Shopping Street at Ravenswood, including adjacent and adjoining land use, if established separately, is a restricted discretionary activity, and matters of discretion in 31.23.1 (b)(iii) and (j) (noted above) will enable appropriate consideration of building placement to achieve interaction between the building and the street.*
- (b) *Town Square:*
- (i) *Policy 18.1.1.12(e)(i)) requires provision of a Town Square as a focal point for the town centre within a pedestrian focussed environment.*
 - (ii) *ODP158A shows the Town Square, which is part of a wider Reserve, as centrally located public open space, with pedestrian linkage from the adjoining Principal Shopping Street through to the Taranaki Stream riparian corridor/community linkage and the existing pedestrian/cycling bridges across the Taranaki Stream.*
 - (iii) *Relevant matters of discretion require that the Town Square be physically and visually connected to and integrated with the Principal Shopping Street and of sufficient size to enable a range of community activities and interaction (rule 31.25.4(k) and (l)). Again, matters of discretion relating to design and appearance ensure that*

these factors will be appropriately considered (rule 31.25(b) and (j)).

(c) *Internal connectivity (including a north-south linkage from Bob Robertson Drive to the Taranaki Stream corridor):*

(i) *Policy 18.1.1.12(e)(vi) requires a connected network of walkways and cycleways promoting walking and cycling between developments along Bob Robertson Drive and linking the Business zone land to the Taranaki Stream.*

(ii) *The ODP identifies internal vehicular and pedestrian linkages within the commercial development areas, and pedestrian linkages across existing roads and to the surrounding residential area and open space, providing for a high degree of connectivity.*

(iii) *Relevant matters of discretion require safe walking, cycling and vehicle access to the road network (rule 31.25.4(g)) connections to planned or formed cycling infrastructure (rule 31.25.4(h); and assessment against Council road design attributes and standards (rule 31.25.4(i)).*

(d) *Pedestrian routes maximising integration with building frontages:*

(i) *Policy 18.1.1.12(e)(ii) requires high quality, attractive and engaging streetscapes to enhance amenity and maximise integration with building frontages.*

(ii) *Integration of pedestrian routes will be addressed through matters of discretion regarding design and appearance, including orientation of building towards roads and pedestrian linkages, and minimisation of blank walls to create an engaging streetscape (rule 31.25.4(b)). Matters of discretion relevant to the Principal Shopping Street are discussed above at paragraph 9(a)(iii).*

(e) *Configuration of carparking and vehicle access*

(i) *Policy 18.1.1.12(e)(i) requires the Principal Shopping Street to have a pedestrian focus and walking and cycling is to be promoted as a means of travel (policy*

18.1.1.12(e)(vi). Policy 18.1.1.12 (d) requires car parking to achieve the efficient utilisation of town centre land, recognising the role and function of the emerging Key Activity Centre (KAC) while maintaining a high level of amenity.

(ii) Matters of discretion require the provision of car parking and vehicle accesses to be achieved in a functional and safe manner, including that parking areas be located to the side or rear of main entrance façades; the inclusion of safe pedestrian connections between parking areas and buildings; and limited vehicular access to parking areas located off the Principal Shopping Street to avoid conflict with pedestrians and support continuous street frontages (rule 31.25.4(f)).

(f) Consideration of building height and scale:

(i) Policy 18.1.1.12 (c) provides for development that ensures an attractive, compact and cohesive town centre with a unique sense of identity and a high quality of design.

(ii) As previously mentioned, matters of design and appearance are matters of discretion, including activation and engagement with roads, linkages, Principal Shopping Street and public spaces (rule 31.25.4(b)(vii) and the height and bulk of corner buildings to be considered, taking into account the scale of adjoining intersections (rule 31.25.4 (b)(viii)).

14 Because of the comprehensiveness of all of the above and how recently it was arrived at, I consider that a two-step assessment of the currently proposed Plan provisions would be the most appropriate:

- (a) Step 1: if the Proposed provisions have the same or similar effect of the approved Consent Order provisions, then they can be deemed to still be the most appropriate urban design outcome and no further assessment would be required.
- (b) Step 2: if the Proposed provisions provide for outcomes that are materially different than the approved Consent Order provisions, then those differences require full re-assessment.

Proposed Waimakariri District Plan provisions

- 15 I understand that the Proposed District Plan was notified prior to confirmation of PC30, and does not provide for rezoning of the Ravenswood Commercial Area as approved through PC30. RDL has made a submission seeking Town Centre zoning for the Ravenswood Commercial Centre, and seeks to align the new provisions with the PC30 Consent Order. My analysis is based on the RDL version of the provisions as appended to the evidence of Mr. David Haines.
- 16 Key characteristics of the current RDL proposal are:
- (a) Classify the centre as a Town Centre zone (to be re-named North Woodend);
 - (b) Retain an Outline Development Plan that is consistent with the PC30 version (proposed rule DEV-NWD-R1 and the ODP in DEV-NWD-APP2 compared to PC30 ODP 158 / 158A);
 - (c) Require restricted discretionary activity resource consent for new buildings and other key spatial outcomes as per the PC30 version (proposed rule DEV-NWD-R4 compared to PC30 rule 31.25.4); and
 - (d) Requirement that development be assessed against numerous urban design matters (proposed rule DEV-NWD-MD2 compared to PC30 rule 31.25.4).
- 17 Having read the proposed RDL provisions, I consider that:
- (a) The same key resource management approach and methods are to be used;
 - (b) The same fundamental urban design outcomes are sought;
 - (c) The same, or a very similar, resource consent process and considerations would apply, giving the Council an equivalent scope and degree of management capability; and
 - (d) All things being equal, I would expect identical applications processed under the PC30 Consent Order and proposed RDL provisions alongside one another to yield the same or very similar results.
- 18 On the basis of the above, I consider that the proposed provisions (RDL version) are sufficiently aligned with the PC30 Consent Order version that they will provide for the same or very similar urban design outcomes to eventuate. Because of this, I do not consider that any further or re-assessment of the new provisions in urban design terms is necessary.
- 19 I have also been asked to comment on whether the land use activity "Trade Suppliers" should itself require a land use consent (proposed rule DEV-NWD-R3).

In urban design terms it does not; the proposed provisions already require restricted discretionary activity consent address all relevant urban design issues that a Trade Supplier would give rise to including the layout of sites and car parking areas, and building appearance.

Conclusion

- 20 I am satisfied that the PWDP provisions sought by RDL are consistent with the approved PC30 outcome.
- 21 I confirm that my assessment remains unchanged in the context of PWDP and that rezoning of the Ravenswood Commercial Area and the suite of provisions proposed are appropriate from an urban design effects perspective. The provisions have been thoroughly tested and are context / site-specific; this makes them more effective than what could be termed more generic whole-of-district alternatives in urban design terms.

Dated 26 March 2024

Ian Colin Munro