

Before the Independent Hearings Panel
at Waimakariri District Council

under: the Resource Management Act 1991

in the matter of: Proposed private plan change RCP31 to the Operative
Waimakariri District Plan

and: **Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited**
Applicant

Summary of evidence of Nicole Lauenstein

Dated: 3 August 2023

Reference: JM Appleyard (jo.appleyard@chapmantripp.com)
LMN Forrester (lucy.forrester@chapmantripp.com)

chapmantripp.com
T +64 4 499 5999
F +64 4 472 7111

PO Box 993
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

Auckland
Wellington
Christchurch



SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF NICOLE LAUENSTEIN

- 1 My full name is Nicole Lauenstein.
- 2 I have the qualifications of Dipl. Arch. and Dipl. R.U.Pl., equivalent to a Master in Architecture and a Master in Urban Design (Spatial and Environmental Planning) from the University of Kaiserslautern, Germany. Before moving to New Zealand, I became a member of the BDA (German Institute of Architects) and the AIA (Association Internationale des Architects). I was an elected member of the Urban Design Panel for the Christchurch City Council from 2008 to 2016 and am a member of the Urban Design Forum.
- 3 I am director of a + urban, a Christchurch based architecture and urban design company established in 1999. I have over 25 years of professional experience in architecture and urban design, in particular within the crossover area of urban development, master planning, and comprehensive spatial developments.
- 4 I practised as an Urban Designer and Architect for the first 8 years in Germany, Netherlands, England and Spain and Australia before reestablishing my own architectural and urban design practice in New Zealand. In both practices I have undertaken many projects combining the architectural and urban disciplines. Projects have been varied in scale and complexity from urban revitalisation of city centres, development of growth strategies for smaller communities, architectural buildings in the public realm and private residential projects in sensitive environments.

SUMMARY

- 5 The proposal completes and consolidates the urban form of Ōhoka. It assists in better defining the different elements that contribute to the urban form by providing legible thresholds between the outer areas and the core and it supports the centric form by strengthening the commercial and community centre on Whites Road.
- 6 This development provides for a variety of densities in Ōhoka, drawing a wider range of people to the area and providing housing to cater for various needs. This builds community diversity with a wide-ranging socio-economic reach, a range of ages, and different cultural backgrounds. This fosters community strength and resilience.
- 7 The small commercial and community hub, within easy walking distance of local residents, will help meet day-to-day needs and support activities within the neighbouring Ōhoka Domain. The potential introduction of a new school would provide easy access to education for local residents within their community footprint.

- 8 The location opposite the Domain increases active and passive surveillance for the area, adds security over the community, and provides direct links from the PC31 site to the Domain. This activates this green space. The development makes these connections through extending green corridors, increasing passive surveillance, and through a desirable walking / cycling / active space throughout the community.
- 9 Village character and heritage of Ōhoka are reflected in the spatial layout of the proposal, in the design of streets and public spaces, in the edge treatment of the perimeter roads, in the placement of the commercial centre, in the landscape treatment of the waterway margins, and in the location and design of the village gateways/thresholds.
- 10 PC31 is well suited to improve the ecological health of the waterways through:
 - 10.1 naturalisation;
 - 10.2 protection of the margins of the waterways; and
 - 10.3 runoff treatment in stormwater management areas (*SMA's*).
- 11 In doing so, this lifts the resilience of the land and the community.
- 12 Development in Ōhoka, when compared to Kaiapoi, Pegasus, or Woodend, clearly avoids areas of natural hazards. This further adds resilience to development within the district.
- 13 In my view, the proposed development is a better outcome than the alternative 4ha lifestyle development anticipated under both the Operative and Proposed District Plans.

RESPONSE TO SUBMITTER EVIDENCE

- 14 I have considered the urban design evidence of Richard Knott on behalf of the Waimakariri District Council (as a submitter).
- 15 As a preliminary comment, while I understand that Mr Knott's experience and qualifications allow him to consider various aspects of the proposal, including planning, the evidence is titled Urban Design evidence. However, in my view the evidence is primarily based on planning matters. Mr Knott looks into urban aspects, but from a planning perspective without providing the relevant urban analysis and evaluation. I consider this has resulted in an assessment of the proposal from a primarily planning perspective.
- 16 Mr Knott earlier voiced concerns that the level of information provided as part of the original application was insufficient to assess

the proposal and requested more detailed information about the indicative masterplan and road cross sections. These details have now been provided, which Mr Knott has acknowledged. However, they are not considered in detail by Mr Knott, with his evidence focusing instead on the “overarching features”. In my view, this approach provides a limited basis to assess the proposal from an urban design perspective and ignores many key elements that constitute a full urban design assessment. Based on this limited scope, Mr Knott forms the opinion that the proposal “does not reflect the character or form of the existing Ōhoka area” (refer paragraph 18).

- 17 In my view, from an urban design perspective, the detailed indicative masterplan, the urban layout, amenity, built form, green and blue network, the pedestrian/cycle network, connectivity and accessibility, street cross sections, open space allocations and commercial areas are the key contributing urban design elements that combined create the “overarching features” and character and form of the proposal. As I have outlined in my evidence in chief, together they contribute to the character of Ōhoka, in particular the “village character”, and result in an appropriate development outcome in terms of character and form in this location.

Village character

- 18 Mr Knott does not appear to consider what creates village character from an urban design perspective and instead relies essentially on a policy definition, with an emphasis on density and lot size. In my view, village character cannot be reduced to low density, otherwise every low-density environment (i.e. Mandeville) would have village character.
- 19 In my view, the main contributor to the village character of Ōhoka is the unique landscape setting of the core of Ōhoka, nestled between the main waterways visually confined by large trees along these waterways. This spatial setting, combined with the historic buildings and places, creates the village structure. Most Ōhoka residents live outside of this core, hidden behind landscaped boundaries and property sizes are not necessarily discernible.
- 20 The proposal emulates this. It has been carefully designed so that its size / future population will not be obvious. The majority of the proposal is tucked away behind vegetation, leaving only the core part of the development, between Mill Road and Ōhoka Stream, visible and connected to the core of Ōhoka.
- 21 In paragraph 34 onwards, Mr Knott describes the character of Ōhoka. Following his description, he locates Ōhoka mainly along Mill Road and Bradleys Road. I assume he means Mill Road and Whites Road, as Bradleys Road forms more of an edge to the settlement.

- 22 In paragraph 34.3, Mr Knott describes the more secluded, out of view developments of Keetly Place and Hallfield Drive. Following his description I believe he means Wilsons Drive. I know Ōhoka very well and have been involved in several Ōhoka urban design assessments, and Hallfield Drive does not have a cul-de-sac as described by Mr Knott. Hallfield is a recent development that will, in future, link through to adjacent development to the southeast and then connect back to Mill Road.
- 23 Mr Knott then concludes that 'In summary, based on the above and the brief description given in Policy 18.1.1.9, the lasting impression of the existing rural village character of Ōhoka is that of residential, commercial and community developments on generous lots fronting Mill Road, within a wider area developed for lifestyle development'.
- 24 I do not consider this a sufficient base to understand the more complex matter of 'village character' as Mr Knott does not take the spatial and structural settings of the core into account, nor does he consider the full extent of the existing development and future development potential of the areas surrounding the core. When all of this is taken into consideration the proposed site can clearly be seen as a gap within the Ōhoka village structure and a natural extension.
- 25 Finally, several submitters, and Mr Nicholson and Mr Knott, have voiced concern about the total number of dwellings proposed. It is important to understand that development would not occur all at once. My understanding is that development will be staged and may take up to 10 years to be completed. Within these timeframes other areas in Ōhoka like Hallfield and the large area north of Mill Road will also develop, further completing the urban form.

Other matters

- 26 In paragraph 50 Mr Knott refers to the edge treatment and suggests that the desire to screen the development outside of the village core is a measure that 'limits physical connections to the surrounding areas'. This is not the case, as explained in my evidence in chief (and the evidence of **Mr Falconer** and **Mr Compton-Moen**) there are several road access points and pedestrian connections along Whites Road that are intended to provide a good level of connectivity and access.
- 27 Mr Knott's impression in paragraph 55 that 'the proposal will be the dominant feature of the area' and that 'PC31 will not augment the existing Ōhoka but will create an entirely new place of which the existing becomes a small part' is not correct in my view. The proposal places the commercial and community activities deliberately into the core of the settlement to strengthen the local community and to connect directly with the existing residents. It proposes a strong green confinement to the core completing the

structure and form of the village centre. These very deliberate design measures will allow the proposal to integrate with the existing structure of Ōhoka and connect to the village community.

CONCLUSION

- 28 There are several strong urban design contributions the proposal makes for Ōhoka:
 - 28.1 Completing the urban form of Ōhoka;
 - 28.2 Building on the narrative and character of the rural village;
 - 28.3 Adding to the diversity and variety of living environments;
 - 28.4 Improving the connectivity and accessibility within Ōhoka;
 - 28.5 Supporting the local community and providing local commercial facilities;
 - 28.6 Increasing activity around the Domain providing passive surveillance for the area;
 - 28.7 Providing ecological and environmental benefits throughout the green and blue network; and
 - 28.8 Adding to the resilience of Ōhoka and the wider District.
- 29 The proposal provides a growth outcome in an area that is largely void of natural hazards, it will support existing development in the surrounding area and contributes to a well-functioning urban environment in Ōhoka, the wider District and Greater Christchurch.

Dated: 3 August 2023

Nicole Lauenstein