

**BEFORE HEARING COMMISSIONERS  
FOR WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**UNDER** the Resource Management  
Act 1991

**IN THE MATTER** of the Operative  
Waimakariri District Plan

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** Private Plan Change Request  
31 (PC31)

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF HUGH ANTHONY NICHOLSON  
ON BEHALF OF WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**URBAN DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE**

**JUNE 2023**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My full name is Hugh Anthony Nicholson. I am a Director at UrbanShift which is an independent consultancy that provides urban design and landscape architecture advice to local authorities and private clients.
- 1.2 I hold a Post-Graduate Diploma of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Urban Design from the University of Sydney. I have more than twenty years' experience in both the public and private sectors. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA).
- 1.3 Prior to my current role, I worked as the Design Lead for the *Ōtākaro Avon River Regeneration Plan* for Regenerate Christchurch for two years, and as a Principal Urban Designer for Christchurch City Council for ten years. Before this I worked as an Urban Designer for the Wellington City Council for seven years.
- 1.4 I am a chair / member of the Nelson City / Tasman District Urban Design Panel and the Akaroa Design Review Panel. I was a member of the advisory panel for the development of the National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) for the Ministry of Justice, and a member of the Technical Advisory Group for the Wellington Waterfront.
- 1.5 My experience includes:
  - a. Project leader for the establishment of the Christchurch Urban Design Panel which reviews significant resource consent applications and significant Council public space projects (2008);
  - b. Project leader for *Public Space Public Life Studies* in Wellington (2004) and Christchurch (2009) in association with Gehl Architects which surveyed how people used different public spaces around the city centre, and how the quality of these public spaces could be improved;

- c. Steering group and design lead for *Share an Idea* and the Draft *Christchurch Central Recovery Plan* including associated draft district plan amendments to the central city zones which were subsequently reviewed and incorporated into the *Christchurch Central Recovery Plan*;
- d. Expert urban design witness for Christchurch City Council to the Independent Hearings Panel for the Christchurch Replacement District Plan on the Strategic Directions and Central City chapters;
- e. Design reviewer for more than fifty resource consent applications for major central city rebuilds for the Christchurch City Council including the Justice & Emergency Precinct, the Central Library, the Bus Interchange and the Christchurch Hospital Outpatients and Acute Services Buildings.
- f. Urban design and landscape peer reviewer and expert witness at hearings for private plan changes<sup>1</sup>, submissions on the Proposed Selwyn District Plan (SDP) and submissions on Variation 1 to the Proposed SDP, for the Selwyn District Council. I have been an expert witness in Environment Court mediations for two of the plan changes.

## 2. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 2.1 I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 and that I agree to comply with it. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express, and that this evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person.

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<sup>1</sup> Private Plan Changes 67, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 79, 81 and 82



### 3. SCOPE

- 3.1 I have been asked by the Waimakariri District Council to carry out a peer review of urban design and landscape matters relating to Private Plan Change Request 31 to the Operative Waimakariri District Plan (operative WDP).
- 3.2 In carrying out this assessment I have visited the site on the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and reviewed:
- a. Ohaka Plan Change Request, Novo Group, June 2022;
  - b. Appendix E, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 535 Mill Road Plan Change, Ohoka, DCM Urban, 21 February 2022;
  - c. Appendix F, Ohoka – Mill Road Development: Urban Design Statement, A+ Urban, 21 February 2023
  - d. Submissions ...;
  - e. Operative Waimakariri District Plan;
  - f. Waimakariri 2048 District Development Strategy, Waimakariri District Council, 2018.
- 3.3 My assessment is focused on the urban design and landscape effects in relation to Ohoka and does not consider the urban form implications for Greater Christchurch.

### 4. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- 4.1 In my peer review and in providing evidence I have drawn strategic direction on good urban form from four sources, the *National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPSUD)*, the *Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS)*, the Operative Waimakariri District Plan (**operative WDP**) and the *Waimakariri 2048 District Development Strategy*, all of which provide overarching guidance.

- 4.2 The **NPSUD** seeks to provide “*well-functioning urban environments*”<sup>2</sup> that enable more people to live near a centre or employment opportunities, and which are well serviced by public transport<sup>3</sup>.
- 4.3 In particular the **NPSUD** promotes urban environments that provide good accessibility between housing, jobs, community services, and natural and open spaces, support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and are resilient to the likely effects of climate change<sup>4</sup>.
- 4.4 The **CRPS** seeks to manage the urban form and settlement pattern of Christchurch through the consolidation and intensification of urban areas.
- 4.5 The objectives of the **CRPS** direct that residential development should be of a high quality and incorporate “good urban design”<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.6 The **CRPS** also seeks housing developments that give effect to the listed principles of good urban design, and to those in the NZ Urban Design Protocol 2005. These principles refer to the need for well-integrated places that have high-quality connections including walking, cycling and public transport, and that are environmentally sustainable<sup>6</sup>.
- 4.7 Objective 15.1.1 in the **operative WDP** seeks “*quality urban environments which maintain and enhance the form and function, the rural setting, character and amenity values of urban areas*”<sup>7</sup>. The explanation notes that the form and function of an urban area significantly affects its setting, character and amenity values and depends on ‘*accessibility to key locations such as the town centre, schools and recreation areas*’, and ‘*the integration of the new development into the rest of the urban area*’
- 4.8 The Urban Environment policies in the **operative WDP** direct that subdivision, land use and development should avoid or mitigate adverse

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<sup>2</sup> National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, Objective 1, p.10

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Objective 3, p.10

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Policy 1, p.10-11

<sup>5</sup> Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, Objective 6.2.3 Sustainability

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, Policy 6.3.2 Development form and urban design

<sup>7</sup> Objective 15.1.1 Urban Environment, Operative Waimakariri District Plan

effects on the rural setting of towns and settlements, and the individual character of settlements<sup>8</sup>, and maintain and enhance the different amenity values and qualities of the different urban environments by providing links to public open spaces including walkways, cycleways and roads, providing efficient and effective transport networks including cycleways, and integrating new developments into existing settlements<sup>9</sup>.

4.9 Policy 18.1.1.9 in the **Operative WDP** seeks that any growth and development in Ohoka occurs in a manner that:

- a. Maintains a rural village character comprising a low density living environment with dwellings in generous setbacks ;
- b. Achieves, as far as practical, a consolidated urban form generally centred around and close to the existing Ohoka settlement;
- c. Encourages connectivity with the existing village and community facilities (the Ohoka School is identified as a community facility);
- d. Achieves quality urban form and function;
- e. Allows opportunities for a rural outlook;
- f. Encourages the retention and establishment of large -scale tree planting and the use of rural style roads and fencing;
- g. Recognises the low lying nature of the area and need to provide for stormwater drainage.

4.10 The *Waimakariri 2048 District Development Strategy*<sup>10</sup> includes a strategic aim of retaining a ‘small settlement character’, and proposes a limited growth option that allows ‘existing vacant areas in the small settlements to develop and provides for some further ‘organic’ expansion opportunities, generally consistent with historic growth rates’. The strategy proposes that most new greenfield and intensification developments will be focused on the larger towns, and the character of the District’s smaller settlements will generally be retained.

4.11 Drawing on the strategic directions outlined above I have reviewed the urban form proposed in PC31 in terms of:

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<sup>8</sup> Policy 15.1.1.2 Urban Environment, Operative WDP

<sup>9</sup> Policy 15.1.1.3 Urban Environment, Operative WDP

<sup>10</sup> *Our District Our Future: Waimakariri 2048 District Development Strategy*, Waimakariri District Council, July 2018

- a. The extent to which it creates a consolidated and compact urban environment, centred around and close to the centre of Ohoka;
- b. The level of connectivity with the existing village, community facilities and the wider district;
- c. The accessibility to a range of services using a range of travel modes including walking, cycling and public transport;
- d. The extent to which the rural village character of Ohoka is maintained, and the rural setting is maintained.

## 5. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

- 5.1 Ohoka is a small semi-rural township north of Christchurch. Established in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, by 1874 there were three flax mills in the area including one at Ohoka, a 'boiling down' works plus a post office and a hotel<sup>11</sup>. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there was a flour mill on the Ohoka Stream until the 1980s, and the Ohoka Bakery supplied a range of breads to surrounding areas until its closure in 1950.
- 5.2 The Eyre County Council had its headquarters and yards in Ohoka, and the railway branch line from Kaiapoi was open until 1965. The Ohoka vicarage served as the original Te Pounamu Maori Girls College established in 1909, as a boarding school for Māori girls<sup>12</sup>.
- 5.3 Over the last three decades Ohoka has been transformed from a small rural service town to a rural / lifestyle settlement with many residents commuting to Christchurch. Rural residential development began in the 1990s with the Millstream and Wilson developments and has continued subsequently with only a few traditional farms left in the area (see figures 1 and 2).
- 5.4 A number of the original buildings have been repurposed as private residences, including the Ohoka Vicarage, Eyre House (the former council

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<sup>11</sup> *Canterbury Water Management Strategy: Waimakariri Zone, Socio-Economic Profile*, Report by Mary Sparrow for Environment Canterbury and Waimakariri District Council, p.10

<sup>12</sup> *Ohoka's old identity and heritage sites under threat*, Mike Crean, The Christchurch Press, 28th July 2012

chambers and office building for the Eyre County Council), and the managers house from the Ohoka flour mill<sup>13</sup>.

- 5.5 The Ōhoka School was established in 1868 and by the latter part of the 1800s had over 200 pupils. Today it is a co-educational state primary school with students from years 1-8<sup>14</sup>.

## 6. COMPACT URBAN FORM

- 6.1 The plan change request seeks to rezone 155.93 hectares of rural land south-west of Ohoka to Residential 3, Residential 4a, Residential 8 and Business 4 in accordance with an Outline Development Plan (ODP).
- 6.2 Mill Road, '*Ohoka's long main street*'<sup>15</sup>, is the heart of Ohoka. At the eastern end at the intersection with Jacksons Road is the school and site of the former flour mill. At the western extent the former Ohoka railway station and yards were located opposite the Ohoka Vicarage at 536 Mill Road.
- 6.3 Figure 3 shows 400 and 800 metre buffers around the main community facilities including the Ōhoka School, the service station and Ohoka Domain. These give some indication of walkable distances although actual walking distances will generally be greater than the buffers due to the orientation of the streets. Almost all of the existing residential areas in Ohoka are within the 400m metre buffer.
- 6.4 The northern end of the PC31 site adjoins Mills Road, and the site extends approximately 1.8km north-south and 1.2km east-west. Approximately 20% of the site sits within the 400m buffer shown in Figure 3, and approximately 46% sits within the 800m buffer.
- 6.5 The PC31 site boundary is 5.67km long. The part of the boundary that adjoins the existing Ohoka township, along Mill Road, around the houses on

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<sup>13</sup> *Ohoka's old identity and heritage sites under threat*, Mike Crean, The Christchurch Press, 28th July 2012

<sup>14</sup> <https://hail.to/ohoka-school/article/pXVNzyU>

<sup>15</sup> *Ohoka's old identity and heritage sites under threat*, Mike Crean, The Christchurch Press, 28th July 2012

the corner of Mill Road and Whites Road, and the frontage opposite the Ohaka Domain is approximately 0.98km or 17% of the total boundary length.

- 6.6 The proportion of the area that is close to the existing township, and the proportion of the boundary that adjoins the existing township are both useful indicators of the degree of compactness and consolidation of the proposed addition. In my opinion a compact site is would generally have higher proportions in the order of 50% or greater indicating that two or more sides of the site are adjacent.
- 6.7 In my opinion PC31 would not contribute to a compact or consolidated urban form for Ohoka, and would create a 'peninsula' of urban land extending south from the existing township surrounded on three sides by rural and rural residential land.

## **7. CONNECTIVITY**

- 7.1 Connectivity refers to creating streets that are joined together in city-wide networks that provide more choices, and support increased resilience and safer places<sup>16</sup>. Well-connected street networks support walking and cycling.
- 7.2 The ODP provides one north-south primary road and two east-west primary roads. Three additional indicative local road connections onto Whites Road, two onto Mill Road and one onto Bradleys Road are indicated. Two north-south pedestrian routes and four east-west pedestrian routes are shown on the ODP. One of the pedestrian route does not extend through to Bradleys Road which I presume is a draughting error.
- 7.3 No indicative cycle routes are shown on the ODP, however, I anticipate that the indicative pedestrian routes would be shared cycle / pedestrian paths.
- 7.4 The ODP proposes frontage upgrades along Mill Road and the northern half of Whites Road. Given the number of houses and densities proposed, and the proximity to Mandeville, I consider that if the plan change is approved

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<sup>16</sup> *People Places Spaces: A design guide for urban New Zealand*, Ministry for the Environment, 2002, p.32

that the road frontages along Bradleys and Whites Road should be upgraded also including provision for shared cycle / pedestrian paths.

- 7.5 There are no pedestrian cycle crossing facilities provided on the ODP. Given the potential increase in population and traffic I consider that if the plan change is approved safe pedestrian / cycle crossing facilities should be provided adjacent to the two proposed commercial areas, and at the eastern end of the stream to connect across to Ohoka Bush.
- 7.6 In my opinion with the recommended changes to the ODP, PC31 would have a *low-moderate* level of connectivity. This rating reflects that while the level of internal connectivity shown on the ODP would be *high* and there are roads on three sides of the ODP, the network of roads which connects PC31 to the wider district are narrow high-speed rural roads with no pedestrian or cycle facilities.

## 8. ACCESSIBILITY

- 8.1 Accessibility relates to providing access to public services and facilities particularly within easily walkable or cyclable distances<sup>17</sup>. The New Zealand Household Travel Survey (NZHTS) found that the average walking trip was 1.0km, and the average cycle trip distance was 4.0km<sup>18</sup>.
- 8.2 Approximately 64% of the site would be within a 1km buffer from the existing service station / shop on the corner of Mills and Whites Roads, or the proposed neighbourhood shops, although given the indirect alignment of streets a smaller proportion would be within this walking distance. I consider that the houses within a 1km walking distance would have *good* access to neighbourhood shops and to open spaces at the Ohoka Domain, however, trips to the supermarket and most other shopping or recreational destinations would require a car. None of the site would be within a 1km average walking trip distance of the Ōhoka School.

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<sup>17</sup> *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol*, Ministry for the Environment, 2005, p.21

<sup>18</sup> New Zealand Household Travel Survey, Ministry of Transport, 2015-2018, <https://www.transport.govt.nz/statistics-and-insights/household-travel/>

- 8.3 Most of the site would be within the 4km average cycle trip distance of both the school and the service station / shop on the corner of Mills and White Roads, however once off the plan change site there are no safe cycling paths or crossing facilities around the township.
- 8.4 There are no public bus routes through Ohoka. The Ōhoka School has two school bus routes for eligible students.
- 8.5 Given limited access to retail, educational, recreational, community services or employment opportunities in Ohoka, the distance from larger centres, and the lack of alternative transport options, I consider that potential residents of the plan change area would be largely dependent on cars on a daily basis.
- 8.6 In my opinion, on balance, PC31 would have a *low* level of accessibility, and would be largely reliant on vehicles to meet the travel requirements of future residents.

## 9. RURAL VS URBAN CHARACTER

- 9.1 The Operative WDP seeks to maintain the rural village character of Ohoka<sup>19</sup>, while the NPS-UD applies to urban environments which are defined as land that “*is, or is intended to be, predominantly urban in character*”<sup>20</sup>. Rural and urban environments are generally regarded to be at opposite ends of a spectrum. For example, Statistics NZ defines rural areas as “*those areas that are not urban*”<sup>21</sup>. I consider that it is questionable whether Ohoka village is, or was ever intended to be, predominantly urban in character, and whether the NPS-UD should apply.
- 9.2 Ohoka straddles two slightly wider statistical areas which cover 3.74km<sup>2</sup>. The population of these statistical areas was 297 in both the 2018 and 2006 censuses<sup>22</sup>. PC31 proposes an additional 845 households. The average Waimakariri household size is 2.6 persons which indicates that PC31 might

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<sup>19</sup> Policy 18.1.1.9, Operative Waimakariri District Plan

<sup>20</sup> Section 1.4, Interpretation, NPS-UD 2020

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.stats.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Methods/Urban-accessibility-methodology-and-classification/Download-document/Urban-accessibility-methodology-and-classification.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohoka>



increase the population of Ohoka by approximately 2,200 people. This would be a population increase of more than 700%. This growth corresponds to the growth of a village into a small rural town with associated physical, economic, social and environmental changes. For example the populations of Oxford and Pegasus are 2,200 and 3,300 respectively.

- 9.3 Both the operative WDP and the Waimakariri 2048 District Development Strategy seek to 'maintain' or 'retain' the village character of the smaller townships including Ohoka. In my opinion it is not possible to increase the population of Ohoka by more than 700% and retain the existing village character. This is not to say that the new character would necessarily be 'bad', however, the character of a village with 300 residents is inherently different from the character of a town with 2,500 residents.
- 9.4 PC31 proposes that the main part of the site would be developed with an average density of 12hh/ha. This is equivalent to a typical suburban density in Christchurch and generally requires some medium density housing to meet this target. While this is not a 'bad' character, and there are a number of benefits from increased density, it would be in contrast to the existing housing stock in Ohoka which is characterised by generous setbacks, large gardens and large houses. If the plan change is approved I consider that this density would be appropriate in order to promote the efficient use of land, however, I do not consider that it is possible to retain the existing village character with these proposed densities.
- 9.5 PC31 proposes a possible retirement home on part of the site and makes associated regulatory changes such as increasing the height limit to 12 metres. This could have positive benefits including providing for aging in place, however, I note that retirement villages generally include large scale buildings and signage associated with a community hubs, offices, dining rooms and kitchens and assisted care apartments. The independent units and outdoor living spaces are generally small and relatively dense. While this is not necessarily an 'adverse' effect in itself, in my opinion it will significantly change the village character of Ohoka.

- 9.6 In my opinion PC31 would fail to ‘maintain’ or ‘retain’ the rural village character of Ohoka as a result of the increased size and population of the settlement, the increased ‘suburban’ densities, and the potential scale of the retirement home / educational facility.

## 10. WELL-FUNCTIONING URBAN ENVIRONMENT

- 10.1 The NPS-UD seeks planning decisions that contribute to a well-functioning urban environment. It defines a well-functioning urban environment as having *‘good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport’* and supporting *‘reductions in greenhouse gas emissions’*<sup>23</sup>.
- 10.2 Settlement at Mandeville was triggered in the early 1980s by the zoning of an area for rural residential development and the development of a sports ground on publicly owned land that was originally the Mandeville Race Course. Further residential development occurred throughout the 1990s. There are currently approximately 500 dwellings in Mandeville which based on the average household size for Waimakariri of 2.6 persons per household indicates a population in the order of 1,300 persons.
- 10.3 PC31 would largely infill the rural land between Ohoka and Mandeville giving rise to a sprawling low-density residential conurbation with a combined population in the order of 3,850 people. Ohoka / Mandeville is not on a major transport route, has no significant retail or employment opportunities, limited community services, and no commercial or civic centre. Much of the surrounding land has non-productive rural residential land uses, and extended town is likely to function as a dormitory / lifestyle settlement.
- 10.4 In my opinion the Ohoka / Mandeville conurbation would not contribute to a well-functioning urban environment. In particular I consider that it does not have good access to jobs or community services, or have facilities for active and public transport. Travel would be car dependent and combined with the

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<sup>23</sup> Policy 1, National Policy Statement on Urban Development, 2020

low-density residential land use the settlement would not support reductions in green house gas emissions.

## 11. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

11.1 I have reviewed the urban design, landscape and visual impact assessment in Appendix E of the application prepared by DCM Urban (February 2022).

11.2 I agree with Mr Compton-Moen's description of the existing site character and values in paragraph 3.1 of his report.

11.3 I have used a seven point scale drawn from the NZILA's *Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*<sup>24</sup> to assess the scale of effects of the Plan Change on the landscape character and the visual impact:

very low	low	mod-low	moderate	mod-high	high	very high
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11.4 In my opinion the effects of the proposed plan change on the landscape character from an open rural character to a residential subdivision would have a *moderate-high* impact reflecting the change from an open rural landscape with long views and a small number of built elements, to a suburban landscape with shorter views, enclosed spaces and a greater number of built elements. In forming this opinion I note that the surrounding areas east, west and south have rural or rural residential land uses, and the existing houses along Mill Road currently look south over open farmland.

11.5 I have reviewed Mr Compton-Moen's visual impact analysis and broadly agree with his selection of viewpoints and description of the views.

11.6 Bearing in mind that the visual impact of the proposal is a subset of the attributes that contribute to change in landscape character, in my opinion the visual impact from the viewpoints on Whites, Mill and Bradley Roads would

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<sup>24</sup> *Te Tangi A Te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, May 2021, pp. 63-65

be *high*. In forming this opinion I note that there are generally open views over extensive farmland along three sides, and the density of the Residential 3 and 8 zones, together with the scale of the retirement village / educational facility would be significantly greater than the surrounding areas. I note that Mr Compton-Moen considers that the visual impact of the plan change from these viewpoints would be *minor or less than minor*.

- 11.7 While the proposed mitigation measures MM1, MM2 and MM3 and MM5 may be positive features of the proposal, they do not provide landscape or visual mitigation. While the restriction of solid fencing along the edges of the site in MM6 is appropriate, solid fencing along rear and side yards will be in contrast to the surrounding areas where 1.8m high solid fences are rare. MM7 and MM8 propose landscape treatments to the west, south and east. It is unclear how these will be owned or managed. A 10 metre wide landscape strip indicated in MM7 with two rows of trees will require mowing or additional maintenance.
- 11.8 In my opinion, with the proposed mitigation measures, the impact on the landscape character would remain *moderate-high* and the visual impact would be reduced to *moderate-high*.
- 11.9 I note that Policy 6 of the NPS-UD specifically directs that changes to amenity values such as landscape character and visual amenity need to be balanced against the positive effects of increased housing supply and choice, and are not, of themselves, an adverse effect.

## **12. SUBMISSIONS**

- 12.1 Submission 216 (Waimakariri District Council) suggests that the adverse landscape and visual effects have not been adequately assessed<sup>25</sup>, and that while the urban design within the development has been considered there has been little effort at integrating the proposal into the wider Waimakariri urban environment<sup>26</sup>. Furthermore, the submitter argues that PC31 would

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<sup>25</sup> Submission 216, RCP031, Waimakariri District Council, paragraph 4.8

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, paragraph 4.9

not provide a sufficiently integrated and “well-functioning” urban environment as described in the NPS-UD<sup>27</sup>.

- 12.2 I agree with these parts of Submission 216 as outlined in previous sections. I also agree with the submitter that Ohoka has not been identified as a key activity centre or a node for growth, and would be at odds with the centres-based approach intended in higher order documents. If PC31 is approved it will effectively develop the rural land between Ohoka and Mandeville and *“will create a scenario whereby the two settlements will effectively appear as one with little in the way of open rural character to differentiate between the communities”*<sup>28</sup>.
- 12.3 Submissions 502 (R Pegler), 451 (M & M McKay), 428 (C Myall), 590 Jackson & Breen) note that if PC31 is approved an additional 850 houses may be constructed in Ohoka, and consider that growth of this scale will overshadow the existing Ohoka community and change the existing rural village character. I agree with these submitters and consider that the character of a village with 300 residents is inherently different from the character of a town with 2,500 residents.
- 12.4 Submissions 502 (R Pegler), 518 (Residents of Birchdale Place), 590 Jackson & Breen), 242 (C & G McKeever), 420 (R Wilson) note that the ‘rural character’ of Ohoka derives from generously landscaped sections (eg. rural small holdings between 0.5 and 4ha) with open views over rural land, and consider that the proposed development with 500m<sup>2</sup> sections and ‘urban density’ would alter the rural character.
- 12.5 I agree with these submitters and consider that the difference between urban and rural character derives primarily from the density of residential land use. A large part of PC31 would have a density of 12 hh/ha which is equivalent to many suburban areas in Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Christchurch. This suburban character is clearly distinct from Ohoka’s rural village character

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, paragraph 22

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, paragraph 42

with generously landscaped sections, low-density dwellings set back from the road and open rural outlook.

- 12.6 Submissions 451 (M & M McKay), 518 (Residents of Birchdale Place), 590 Jackson & Breen), 242 (C & G McKeever) consider that the provision of 'rural features' such as rural style entrances, omitting curb and channels, planting street trees, landscape strips, rural fencing, retaining shelterbelts and varying road widths are not sufficient measures to protect rural character.
- 12.7 I agree with these submitters and repeat that the key element of the rural or semi-rural character of Ohoka is the low density housing set back from the roads on generously landscaped sections. Placing a rural streetscape in front of suburban houses on 500m<sup>2</sup> sections is likely to cause functional problems such as damage from parking on the grass verges rather than protecting 'rural character'.

### **13. CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 In my opinion PC31 would not contribute to a compact or consolidated urban form for Ohoka, and would create a 'peninsula' of urban land extending south from the existing township surrounded on three sides by rural or rural residential land.
- 13.2 I consider that with recommended changes to the ODP, PC31 would have a *low-moderate* level of connectivity reflecting that the network of roads which connects PC31 with the wider district are narrow high-speed rural roads with no pedestrian or cycle facilities.
- 13.3 In my opinion PC31 would have a *low* level of accessibility and would be largely reliant on vehicles to meet the travel requirements of future residents.
- 13.4 I consider that PC31 would fail to 'maintain' or 'retain' the rural village character of Ohoka as a result of the increased size and population of the settlement, the increased 'suburban' densities, and the potential scale of the retirement home / educational facility.

- 13.5 In my opinion the Ohoka / Mandeville conurbation would not contribute to a well-functioning urban environment. In particular I consider that it does not have good access to jobs or community services, or have facilities for active and public transport. Travel would be car dependent and combined with the low-density residential land use the settlement would not support reductions in green house gas emissions.
- 13.6 In my opinion the effects of PC31 on the landscape character of Ohoka and the visual impact would be *moderate-high*, although I note that the NPS-UD directs that these effects need to be balanced against the positive effects of increased housing supply.
- 13.7 I consider that the provision of 'rural features' such as rural style entrances, omitting curb and channels, planting street trees, landscape strips, rural fencing, retaining shelterbelts and varying road widths are not sufficient measures to 'protect the rural character' of Ohoka where PC31 proposes residential section sizes of 500m<sup>2</sup> and densities of 12hh/ha.



**Hugh Anthony Nicholson**

June 2023



Figure 1: Ohoka Aerials - 1960 - 1980

(PC31 outlined in red)

0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Kilometres

Scale: 1:15,000 @A3





Figure 2: Ohoka Aerials - 2000 - 2022  
(PC31 outlined in red)

0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Kilometres  
Scale: 1:15,000 @A3

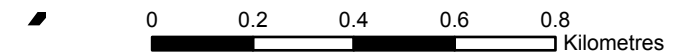




Figure 3: Ohoka 400m Walkable Catchments

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Scale: 1:15,000 @A3

Map Created by Canterbury Maps on 25/04/2023 at 1:26 PM

Ohoka community facilities

400m walkable catchments

Open Spaces / Reserves

Residential zones

PC31 Area

