

**BEFORE INDEPENDENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED BY THE  
WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

The Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA** or  
**the Act**)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

Hearing of Submissions and Further  
Submissions on the Proposed Waimakariri  
District Plan (**PWDP** or **the Proposed Plan**)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

Hearing of Submissions and Further  
Submissions on Variations 1 and 2 to the  
**Proposed** Waimakariri District Plan

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

Submissions and Further Submissions on the  
Proposed Waimakariri District Plan by **Mike  
Greer Homes NZ Limited**

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**EVIDENCE OF RORY MCLEAN LANGBRIDGE  
ON BEHALF OF MIKE GREER HOMES NZ LIMITED REGARDING HEARING  
STREAM 12E**

DATED: 5 March 2024

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## INTRODUCTION

- 1 My name is Rory Mclean Langbridge.
- 2 I am a landscape architect and hold the qualifications BSc (Victoria University), Bachelor of Landscape Architecture with Honours (Lincoln University), I have been a Registered Landscape Architect of Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects since 2005. I have previously been on the executive council of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA) and am a past chair of the Nelson Marlborough branch of the NZILA.
- 3 I have over 30 years of experience as a landscape architect, specialising in site planning and detailed landscape design, as well as the preparation of visual impact assessments for both Council and Environment Court hearings.
- 4 While this is not a matter before the Environment Court, I have read the Environment Court's Code of Conduct and agree to comply with it. My qualifications as an expert are set out above. The matters addressed in my evidence are within my area of expertise, however where I make statements on issues that are not in my area of expertise, I will state whose evidence I have relied upon. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in my evidence.
- 5 RMM have been engaged by Balance Developments Ltd (**BDL**) to prepare landscape evidence in relation to the proposed rezoning accompanied by a proposed Outline Development Plan (**ODP**) for a site that is located south of Kaiapoi.

## SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 6 I have been asked by Balance Development Ltd on behalf of Mike Greer Homes NZ Limited (the **Submitter** or **Mike Greer Homes**) to provide landscape evidence in support of Mike Greer Homes submissions to the proposed Waimakariri District Plan (**pWDP**) and Variation 1 to the pWDP to rezone of 14.20Ha land from Rural Lifestyle Zone to Medium Density Residential Zone.
- 7 In my evidence I address the following issues:
  - (a) The identification of the existing landscape values, visual amenity and rural character of the site and existing environment, followed by an assessment of potential effects

arising from rezoning of the site from Rural Lifestyle (**RL**) Zone to Medium Density Residential (**MDR**) Zone under the proposed Waimakariri District Plan.

- (b) The landscape and visual effects of future development deriving from the proposed ODP on the existing and anticipated landscape character and amenity of the site and its receiving environment.
- (c) The rationale behind the proposed landscape treatments for the site's public road frontage to Main North Road (**MNR**) and Rail corridor.
- (d) The rationale behind the proposed landscape treatment along the riparian boundaries both north and south of the site including the existing residential zoning to the north.
- (e) The positive effects associated with the enhancement of waterways with indigenous planting along both the northern and southern boundaries and in an eastern Stormwater Management Area (**SMA**) within the site.
- (f) The positive effects associated with the provision of greenbelt/pedestrian/ cycle connection that forms the public boundary facing MNR and providing a recreational walking loop including both riparian corridors and the eastern SMA.

## **SUMMARY**

- 8 My evidence assesses the rezoning of approximately 14.2 hectares of land adjacent the southern entrance into Kaiapoi RL Zone to MDR Zone under the pWDP (the **Site**), with an ODP applied to the Site, which has been designed to align with the MDR provisions.
- 9 At a broad scale, the proposed rezoning of the site presents a strategic expansion of Kaiapoi settlement, given the site infills a gap between existing residential development an industrial land use further south, it also extends the boundary of Kaiapoi from one natural boundary (Kaikainui Stream) to the next (Courtenay Stream) and extends fully from MNR east to the main trunk line. From a landscape perspective these present robust boundaries.
- 10 The proposed ODP is seeking a more intensive residential development and consideration has been given to ensuring it provides a well-functioning urban extension to Kaiapoi South that complements and integrates with a developing green cycle and pedestrian network. The ODP allows for generous riparian setbacks and integrates these with urban parks, and SMA's.

- 11 The ODP also proposes a generous setback from MRN, that will extend and enhance the 'parkway' character that is a feature of this entrance into Kaiapoi.
- 12 The naturalness values of the application area are considered to be **low** with rural character values **moderate-low**.
- 13 With the development of the ODP, the primary effect would be the loss of these low to moderate rural qualities, and this being replaced by a significant increase in development density. Left unmitigated, such a change would have a **moderate-high** impact on the amenity values of this area.
- 14 However, with the mitigation measures proposed and the establishment of a green amenity and recreational framework for the area, as well as extending the 'parkway' character of MRN into the southern extent of Kaiapoi these will result in long term **positive** landscape and visual amenity outcomes for this area.

#### **PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY**

- 15 The purpose of my evidence is to assess the effects on landscape values, character and visual effects anticipated from the proposed rezoning of the Site and future development in accordance with the ODP. To assist with this, I compare the proposed rezoning and indicative concept lot layout with a potential baseline development anticipated by the proposed Waimakariri District Plan zoning.
- 16 The scope of my evidence is tailored to suit the nature of the proposed rezoning and its context including the framework of the governing legislation. The statutory documents containing provisions relevant to the proposal are found in the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**), Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (**CRPS**) and the pWDP. My evidence mainly focuses on the objectives, policies, and assessment matters under the pWDP that give effect to the higher-level statutory plans and documents.
- 17 The methodology and terminology used in my evidence has been informed by the *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

- 18 The site was visited with a colleague on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The site visit was undertaken to assist in understanding the landscape character and values within the receiving environment including the outcomes anticipated by the pWDP and assessing the proposed ODP's actual and potential landscape and visual effects.
- 19 My evidence refers to a seven-point rating scale for assessing the proposed ODP's actual and potential landscape and visual effects. The scale is attached in **Appendix A** to my evidence.
- 20 My evidence is formatted as follows:
- A description of the broad scale context of the site, and a description of the receiving environment in terms of the existing landscape attributes and how these contribute to the existing landscape values of the receiving environment considering the proposed RL zoning under the pWDP as the permitted baseline.
  - A description of the site, in terms of its existing landscape attributes, and how these relate to the landscape values of the receiving environment.
  - A description of the proposed ODP, internal road network, landscape treatments on the road frontage and site boundary with the surrounding development, as well as enhancement of waterways within the site.
  - An assessment of the proposed ODP's actual and potential landscape and visual effects on landscape character and amenity values compared to the outcome resulting from a three-lot subdivision on the site as the permitted consented baseline anticipated by the Rural Lifestyle zoning under the pWDP.
  - An overall conclusion on the landscape and visual effects.
- 21 My evidence is accompanied by a Graphic Attachment (**GA**) attached at **Appendix B**, which includes site context plans, the pWDP zoning map, a site analysis plan, connectivity plan, site photographs, and the proposed ODP.

### **BROAD SCALE CONTEXT**

- 22 The recent report prepared by Boffa Miskell (**BM**) "Waimakariri District – Rural Character Assessment" (dated 6 June 2018) is helpful in establishing the existing landscape character and amenity of the receiving environment surrounding the proposed site. The BM report identifies a dozen "character areas" that make up the

rural areas of the Waimakariri District and provides a commentary on the potential for rural residential development and intensification of the rural land, while considering the provisions of the CRPS and the WDP (refer to the Rural Character Areas Plan in the GA – Sheet 3).

- 23 The report identifies the rural context of the Kaiapoi South as “Lower Plains”<sup>2</sup>. The application site also lies close to the boundary of the “Coastal Plains” character area. (refer to the Lower Plains Character Areas Plan in the GA – Sheet 4)
- 24 The Lower Plains character area includes most of the urban development within the Waimakariri District and characterises this rural landscape *“by its changing character in relation to recent small lot development. Once predominantly rural, ... this area is now defined by its increasingly finer grained settlement patterns and human induced characteristics that overlay the rural environment”*<sup>3</sup>.
- 25 The report describes the topography of the plains in the vicinity of the application site is mostly flat, and gently climbing as one travels inland from the coastline. It is noted that few small streams and creeks flow through the area. Typically, the bulk of indigenous vegetation has been removed and replaced by high producing farmland and where it’s been developed, residential gardens. Tall trees, shelterbelts and hedgerows are common, framing and enclosing fields and compartmentalising the landscape.
- 26 The BM report describes the lower plains area as *‘highly modified and encompasses the greatest density of small rural lots in the district.’*<sup>4</sup> While ‘urban’ infrastructure such as kerb and channel and street lighting may be limited in places, the landscape contains many visual cues, such as the spacing of letterboxes at driveways and the linear hedgerow patterns, that are indicative of the changing pattern of development as the area transitions into a more rural residential land use. In addition, it is noted that *“business activities such as construction and manufacturing are also occurring in*

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<sup>2</sup> Boffa Miskell Ltd | Waimakariri District – Rural Character Assessment | 6 June 2018 chp 2.2- pg 10/11

<sup>3</sup> Ibid pg10

<sup>4</sup> Ibid pg12

*this Lower Plains character area*<sup>5</sup>, an observation pertinent to this application.

Medium to small blocks of pastoral farmland remain in the area.

- 27 The report notes that *'Historically, the area was also very important to tangata whenua with a number of signs of early occupation.*<sup>6</sup>
- 28 Finally, it is noted that when considering the potential for intensification, the BM report opines "further intensification of residential activity will need to be managed carefully to avoid the whole area becoming a large sprawling 'rural suburb' devoid of structure or hierarchy of lot size."<sup>7</sup>

## **THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT**

- 29 The receiving environment is considered to be that area surrounding the application site, that is potentially affected by the proposed site rezoning and future development in accordance with the ODP. In essence, the receiving environment takes in roads and neighbouring land within the immediate vicinity of the site, that includes MNR along the site's western boundary, farmland along the sites eastern boundary, and the residential land of Kaiapoi South to the north.
- 30 North of the site, the southern extent of Kaiapoi South, an area currently zoned as Residential 2 in the District Plan is separated from the application site by a 20m wide local purpose reserve that follows the Kaikainui Stream (Refer GA Photos 6 and 12) The residential area of Kaiapoi South is characterised by single storey detached dwellings, surrounded by lawns and gardens. The streets are open and spacious and generally carry only local traffic. (Refer GA Photo 9). Under the pWDP, this area is proposed to become Medium Residential Zone, Variation 1<sup>8</sup>.
- 31 To the west of the site, beyond MNR, a large builder's yard has been developed that extends almost the full length of the application site. (Refer GA Photo 11) The site is

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid pg12

<sup>6</sup> Ibid pg12

<sup>7</sup> Ibid pg14

<sup>8</sup> MRZ Var1 provides lots at an average of 200 sqm. Under the pWDP the purpose of the MDRV1 Zone is to provide for residential areas predominantly used for residential activity with moderate concentration and bulk of buildings, such as detached, semi-detached and terrace housing, low rise apartments and other compatible activities. Such areas are identified close to town and neighbourhood centres, along public transport corridors, or close to public transports.

almost totally screened behind a shelterbelt of pampas grasses. To its south, the balance of this area, extending to SH1, are the paddocks of Easy Lawn Canterbury, an instant lawn supplier and installer. Under the pWDP, this area is proposed to remain as RLZ<sup>9</sup>. (Refer GA Photo 10)

- 32 A regional cycle track has been established along the western edge of MNR.
- 33 To the east across the rail line, the balance of the application site, currently under cropping, is visually contained by the plantings that follow the Courtenay Stream. This planting follows the Courtenay Stream finally forming the southern boundary to the application site.
- 34 A house is currently located on 144 Main North Road that forms part of the application site.
- 35 Beyond the existing house, there lies a series of small paddocks and trees (mostly willow and conifer) that line Courtenay Stream. To the south of Courtenay Stream there is an underutilised and unkempt paddock area that includes a variety of industrial type storage areas.<sup>10</sup>
- 36 This aforementioned area is totally hidden from view from both MNR and Neeves Road that provides access to the site. Currently zoned RU, under the pWDP this area is proposed to remain as RLZ<sup>11</sup>
- 37 In addition to the above, users of the Main Trunk Rail line to and from Christchurch will experience the site daily. It is my understanding the Coastal Pacific Train currently passes the site twice daily between the months of September to May. However, from September 2024 this will be reverting to a four day a week service. (refer GA Photo 5)

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<sup>9</sup> The purpose of the Rural Lifestyle Zone is to provide for primary productive activities, those activities that support rural activities and those that rely on the natural resources that exist in the zone, while recognising that the predominant character is derived from smaller sites.

<sup>10</sup> This is a description gained from the aerial photograph. The site itself is not visible from any publicly accessible locations.

<sup>11</sup> Under the pWDP the purpose of the RL Zone is to provide for primary productive activities, those activities that support rural activities and those that rely on the natural resources that exist in the zone, while recognising that the predominant character is derived from smaller sites. The RL Zone recognises that the area under the zone comprises of residential unit and development site pattern allowing for 4 ha lots in the rural areas of the district.



38 In summary, views of the site are essentially limited to users of MNR both vehicular and bike, and rail passengers using the rail line. Views from both the northern and southern boundaries are very limited by plantings which will be retained should the application be successful. (Refer GA Photos 12-14)

#### **LANDSCAPE VALUES OF THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT**

39 Landscape values are derived from the above descriptions relating to the physical, perceptual, and associative attributes of the site and the receiving environment. These form the baseline, along with the pWDP provisions, for an assessment of landscape and visual effects.

40 A physical feature of the site is the flat nature of the topography and the alluvial makeup of the soil which has dictated the historic land use of this area as an area of grazing and cropping.

41 Shelterbelts have historically been used to moderate the impact of wind on the Canterbury Plains and remnant plantings remain evident.

42 The presence of stock races and fencing provide a reference to the traditional working rural environment in places, however stock is now limited to a single paddock and the bulk of the area is now under a crop or domestic grass for use as instant turf for developments around the region.

43 The Main Trunk Rail track and related foundations and embankment runs along an elevated platform for the full length of the site along its eastern boundary.

44 The natural character of the area is **low** due to the extensive evidence of buildings and built infrastructure and limited to a small level of cropping that remains visible on the site.

45 As an area zoned Rural, visible rural character values are limited to the application site itself and are already compromised to some extent by the development both north and south of the site where residential development is now established and over the road where industrial development is also established. The land management requirements of the instant turf business also to the other side of MNR, further compromises the rural character values of this location. Overall, I would describe the rural character values of this location as **moderate-low**.

- 46 The Kaikainui Stream and associated plantings currently marks the southern expanse of residential Kaiapoi.
- 47 The site and its immediate landscape do not have any special significance for pakeha.
- 48 While I am not a cultural specialist, it is my understanding that the site lies outside of a Wahi Tapu, Wahi Taonga, Nga Wai, Nga Reporepo, or Nga Turanga Tupuna overlay and there are no sites identified of significance to manawhenua (Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga) within the proximity of the site that I am aware of.
- 49 The perceptual values within the immediate landscape surrounding Kaiapoi South stem largely from the open space values and the views derived from the longer views when possible. A secondary value is the relief that the open space provides when separating the industrial landscape further south from the beginning of the residential suburbs of Kaiapoi South. A parkway<sup>12</sup> character is developing to the north of the application site creating an appealing southern entrance into Kaiapoi.
- 50 Overall, the physical, associative, and perceptual attributes, within the receiving environment, possess *low to moderate* values with respect to rural character and *low* values regarding naturalness.

#### **THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT ANTICIPATED BY THE pWDP**

- 51 The Rural Character within the receiving environment anticipated by RL zoning under the pWDP, provides the potential for three 4-hectare lots to be developed on this site.
- 52 The built form standards of the RL Zone comprise maximum dwelling heights of 8.0m above ground level and 12m for other buildings and structures, setbacks for dwellings of 20m from either a road boundary or internal boundary and a maximum limit on the floor area of any single building or structure of 550m<sup>2</sup> while not exceeding 20% of the net area of any allotment. There are no restrictions on boundary treatments.
- 53 As a consequence of a subdivision, a 20m riparian reserve will need to be created along the banks of both the Kaikainui and Courtenay Streams.

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<sup>12</sup> I use the term 'parkway' to describe an urban street with wide landscape berms on either side.

- 54 There is no requirement for landscaping to be undertaken within a 4-hectare subdivision consent process.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

### Existing Site

- 55 The Application Site, (measuring 14.79ha) is legally described as four lots, 170 Main North Road, Kaiapoi (Pt RS 37428), RS38486 and 140 Main Road (LOT 1 DP 19366) and RS39673. The site is bounded by Kaikainui Stream along the northern boundary, the Courtenay Stream along the southern boundary, the Main Trunk line forms the sites eastern boundary and the MNR bounding the sites' western boundary.
- 56 The Kaikainui Stream forms the northern boundary is planted along its true left (northside) bank which is outside of the application site<sup>13</sup>.
- 57 The northern boundary is currently fenced back from the steam by a post and wire farm fence. The stream extends the full width of the application site before going through a culvert under the Main Trunk line at the northeastern corner.
- 58 Views into the site from within the local purpose reserve or from the properties that line the current southern edge of Kaiapoi are very restricted to two locations where a minor gap in the vegetation exists or from the 3 houses that have developed a second storey. (Refer GA Photo 12) It is anticipated that views south from these second storey windows would be possible over the riparian planting however this will also be impacted on when the riparian plantings mature. Views from the upper floors were not specifically assessed due to difficulty of access.
- 59 The eastern boundary is formed by the Main Trunk line and fenced off by a post and wire fence. The rail line itself is elevated 1.5-2.0m above the balance of the site on an embankment that separates of the application site from the balance of the title.
- 60 The southern boundary of the application site, effectively the southern boundary of 144 Main North Road (Lot 1 DP 19366), is a farmhouse surrounded by an established garden. The property is surrounded by a few small paddocks separated by post and

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<sup>13</sup> The species observed include include flax (*Phormium tenax*), manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) toetoe (*Austroderia richardii*), karamū (*Coprosma robusta*), mānatu (ribbonwood; *Plagianthus regius*), kōwhai (*Sophora microphylla*), and kōhūhū (*Pittosporum tenuifolium*)

wire fences. The Courtenay Stream that lines the southern boundary is substantially planted with Willow and Conifer trees.

- 61 MNR along the site's western boundary, is fenced using a post and wire fence. A level difference of between 1-1.5m between the site and the road reserve exists at the northern end of the site. An access road central to the site, provides for vehicle access to the site and provides for vehicle access to be gained to the balance of the property east of the Main Rail line.

## **THE PROPOSAL**

- 62 BDL are seeking to rezone 170 and 144 Main North Road to MRZ in the pWDP, with an Outline Development Plan (ODP) applied to the site (refer to the ODP (Refer GA – Sheet 11)).
- 63 Key features of the ODP are discussed below.

### **Local Purpose Reserves and green amenity recreation loop**

- 64 The proposed setbacks along the northern and southern boundaries of the application site will ensure good separation is maintained and enhanced between adjacent residential areas and provides meaningful long term quality open space.
- 65 A 20m esplanade reserve set back is proposed to be created along the south bank of the Kaikainui Stream that will combine with a nearby proposed recreation reserve and link with the existing Esplanade reserve that follows the north bank. This will create an open space separation of over 40m in width. Planting will be undertaken within this area.
- 66 A stormwater management area (**SMA**) provides for a set back from the rail line along the sites eastern boundary. It is anticipated that this area (measuring 2.277ha) will be partially planted in appropriate amenity and other plantings to provide for separation from the railway track.
- 67 Along the southern boundary, an esplanade reserve will combine with local purpose reserves to create a generous open space reserve and recreational area along the banks of the Courtenay Stream south of the development.

68 The primary purpose of this reserve is to provide separation and privacy to adjacent residential dwellings and to extend and enhance the 'parkway' character that currently flanks MNR extending south from the marked entrance into Kaiapoi.

69 A setback of 10m is proposed along the MNR boundary. that provides a green connection between the esplanade reserves.

70 A green amenity recreation 'loop' will be completed around the periphery of the site (as indicated by the OPD) by the network of reserve areas, the SMA and the MNR planted setback. The loop will be completed via an internal connection through the subdivision with a number of other links established between the residential areas and the reserve areas.

In addition, to enhance connectivity between adjacent residential neighbourhoods, a combined pedestrian/cycleway connection bridge will be established across the Kaikainui Stream.

#### **Stream Enhancements and Stormwater management.**

71 The Esplanade and Local Purpose Reserves will be enhanced through planting both on the banks of the streams as well as providing for some terrestrial habitats. The intention is to create meaningful habitat, biodiversity and ecological linkages along both streams and then connecting them via the SMA along the eastern boundary of the ODP which will be planted with native species and generally increase natural character values that are notably low in the site and immediate vicinity.

#### **Boundary Interfaces**

72 In order to optimise visibility and surveillance of the open areas surrounding the proposed development, it is recommended that boundary fencing along reserve boundaries will be in accordance with the built-form standards (MRZ-BFS8 Fencing) under the pWDP. All fencing or walls fronting the road boundary; or within 2m of a site boundary with a public reserve, walkway or cycleway shall be:

- No higher than 1.2m above ground level; or where the site is a corner site, on one road boundary the height can be increased to 1.8m above ground level where at least 45% of the fence is visually permeable.

- Any fence greater than 0.9m in height above ground level shall be at least 45% visually permeable as depicted in Figure MRZ-2, within 5m of any accessway, or within the structure and vegetation set back area shown in Figure MRZ-1.

### **RELEVANT PLANNING PROVISIONS**

- 73 The statutory documents containing provisions relevant to the proposal are found in the **RMA, CRPS** and the **pWDP**.
- 74 My evidence focuses on the statutory provisions under the pWDP, specifically, the objectives, policies, and assessment matters that give effect to the higher-level statutory documents.

### **Proposed Waimakariri District Plan**

- 75 Under the pWDP the application site is proposed to be rezoned as RL Zone. The purpose of the RL zoning is to provide for primary productive activities, those activities that support rural activities and those that rely on the natural resources that exist in the zone, while recognising that the predominant character is derived from smaller sites.
- 76 The RL zoning comprises the densest residential unit density in the rural areas of the Waimakariri District. This rural area is defined by its fragmented pattern of development and human induced characteristics.
- 77 The character for the RL Zone is considered to be "*a highly modified landscape strongly influenced by fine grained patterns and processes of human induced activity, including a predominance of small rural lots with a resulting pattern of residential units, buildings, fencing, amenity and domestic planting mixed with smaller scale primary production activities; a dominance of human modified open space and vegetation, including paddocks and trees over buildings; and a zone supporting activities reliant on the natural and physical resources of the Rural Lifestyle Zone.*"<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Policy RLZ-P1 Character of Rural Lifestyle Zone

- 78 The activities intended for this zone would be aimed at "*Retain(ing) opportunities for predominant character of small rural lots by avoiding new sites being created, or residential units being erected on sites, that are less than 4ha*".<sup>15</sup>
- 79 The application is to zone the subject area as **MDR** Zone as described under the pWDP.
- 80 The stated purpose of the MDR standards under the proposed plan is to "*A higher density suburban residential zone located close to amenities with a range of housing typologies providing for predominantly residential use*".<sup>16</sup> and which supports a character that provides<sup>17</sup>;
- *higher density living in areas with better access for walking to parks, main centres or local commercial centres.*
  - *multi-unit redevelopment opportunities through flexible development controls and encouragement for multi-site redevelopment.*
  - *high quality building and landscape design for multi-unit residential development with appropriate streetscape landscaping and positive contribution to streetscape character.*
  - *provides for a peaceful residential environment, in particular minimising the adverse effects of nighttime noise and outdoor lighting, and limited signs;*
  - *appropriate internal amenity within sites.*
  - *a mix of detached semi-detached and multi-unit living.*
  - *small-scale commercial, or community-based activities, that service the local community, and home businesses; and*
  - *a wider range of home business-based commercial activity in the Residential Commercial Precinct adjacent to Rangiora Town Centre.*
- 81 The density standards for an MDR Zone limit the number of residential units per allotment to a maximum of 3 and limits the building height of dwellings to 11m plus

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<sup>15</sup> RLZ-P2

<sup>16</sup> Objective MRZ-01

<sup>17</sup> Policy MRZ-P1 Residential Character

1m for the pitch of the roof. The height in relation to a boundary is a maximum of 4 m and complying to a 60° recession plane and a 50% building coverage of the net site area. Complying side yards will be 1.5m at the street edge with side and rear yards set at 1m.

## LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

82 The following assessment addresses the effects on landscape values, visual effects, landscape character, and rural character arising from the proposed rezoning from RL to MDZ and following the ODP a proposed.

### Visual Effects

83 *"A visual effect is a kind of landscape effect. It is a consequence for landscape values as experienced in views. Visual effects are a subset of landscape effects. A visual assessment is one method to help understand landscape effects."*<sup>18</sup>

84 As illustrated in the **View Location Plan** and those relevant site photographs in the GA – Sheets 13 – 18), the actual and potential visual effects of the proposal have been assessed from:

- MNR and associated bike path;
- The Kaikainui Stream Esplanade Reserve that separates Kaiapoi South from the site; and
- Land to the west of MNR.

85 The visual effects from the neighbouring properties to the south of the site across Courtenay Stream and the rural land located to the west of the site have been assessed as being low to very low due to the presence and density of the planting that occupies the Courtenay Stream corridor, or the industrial land use and associated shelterbelt planting that currently exists along MNR provides substantial screening for the site from this area.

86 The visual effects from the neighbouring property immediately east of the site over the rail line. The rail line that separates the two sites, is elevated 1.5-2.0m above the general level of the paddocks, and this establishes both a physical and visual

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<sup>18</sup> *'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.* Page 135.



separation, the only exception being the road that ensures future vehicular access into the site. In addition to the rail line, the SWA that is proposed between the MDZ development and the rail line will be planted as part of this application that would establish a good visual buffer between the two areas. Given any development within this area would be 'new' and not 'established', the sensitivity of this area to development as proposed would be very low.

Visual Effects of development on the site as *anticipated by the pWDP*.

- 87 The visual effects of a permitted subdivision of land zone RL would result in 4.0 hectare lots being spaced evenly across the site. With the parent site measuring 14.79ha, it is anticipated that a complying subdivision could contain up to three 4.0ha lots, in effect two additional lots including the existing on lot 1 DP 19366.
- 88 I am advised that there are numerous environmental constraints that apply to the site, such as waterlogging, effects resulting from the 2011 Christchurch earthquake, the evapotranspiration experienced in this area over summer, coupled with the low potential for any future land owner to access irrigation water, and limits that exist for grazing of the site <sup>19</sup>, Consequently the potential for 'rural' activities to develop at a scale is low and it is more likely that 4.0 ha sites will be under utilised due to these constraints which will in turn lessen the visual quality of any resulting 4 ha development.
- 89 The primary consideration of a baseline subdivision would be the impact that would be anticipated for the users of MNR and the potential for landscaping and the establishment of a public walkway network along the riparian reserves created by the subdivision. A SWA would not be a requirement.
- 90 When viewed from MNR, one could anticipate separate driveways being created which would be comparable with the level of access proposed by the ODP albeit with a distinctly private character.
- 91 With no requirements placed on addressing any impacts that stem from a 4ha subdivision, the only direction being the set back of buildings at least 20m from the road boundary, the mitigation of any effects could be slow in developing. A

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<sup>19</sup> Refer to Statement of Evidence of GEOFFREY DUNHAM – Dated 5 March 2024

complying subdivision would require the setting aside of esplanade reserves along both the Kaikainui and Courtenay Streams. However, there will be no requirement to landscape these areas and there would be limited incentive or opportunity to extend the recreational network north of the site. All stormwater requirements will be addressed on each individual site, and this would remove the possibility of further developing the parkway character of this southern entrance into Kaiapoi.

- 92 Based on the observation of other new 4.0ha subdivisions, a consistent impact is the development of a residential unit as an isolated element located typically central to the site. With the fragmented character of the current landscape, such development will further fragment the landscape and present create a character of further urban sprawl<sup>20</sup>, spilling over the traditional southern extent of Kaiapoi's residential development (Kaikainui Stream).

Visual Effects of the proposed ODP zoned as MDR and when viewed from beyond the site.

- 93 The proposed setbacks from the northern, eastern, and southern boundaries and the creation of a network of partially planted open space will substantially soften the visual presence of the proposed ODP when viewed from beyond the site. As mentioned above, these critically present the opportunity for the further development of the parkway character for this main southern entrance into Kaiapoi and to extend the local public asset of a pedestrian / recreational / open space network for the area.
- 94 Two entrances are proposed from MNR to provide access to the various sections created and this is consistent to what would eventuate from the permitted development.
- 95 By setting back the development 13-14m from MNR as proposed (a set back from road of 10m plus a setback from internal boundary of 3m), and with the restrictions that are proposed to be placed on boundary treatments along this reserve interface, this would enable the parkway that is developing on both sides of MNR further north of the site, to develop further and extend south along its eastern edge and provide for a softening of the new development.

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<sup>20</sup> I use the term urban sprawl purposely as the rural character values in this area are currently limited and additional residential development will further compromise those values that do remain.

- 96 Through the enhancement of the 'parkway' character of MNR, this will contribute to the development of a high-quality long-term entry into Kaiapoi from the south. In my view a positive and preferred outcome to the retention of existing and limited rural qualities in this location.
- 97 Initially, as the site develops, open views into the proposed site would be possible from MNR in particular, over the northern half when travelling south as the observer will be slightly elevated above the site.
- 98 As development progresses under a MDR zoning, development may include 3 storey units being developed in places and the new density stemming from sections as small as 200m<sup>2</sup>. This is a reasonable departure from 'a normal' or traditional (familiar) residential development within the southern extent of Kaiapoi and this difference in itself may create an effect some would consider to be adverse.<sup>21</sup>
- 99 To integrate this new form of residential development into the locale, planting is recommended in all open space reserves that have been allowed for on all 4 sides of the new development area. When established and mature, these have the potential of providing high quality local open space opportunities and will settle and help integrate the new development into this environment.
- 100 Due to the existing planting along Kaikainui Stream, the orientation of the houses and the typical fencing that has been used on individual lots within the Kaiapoi South area, views from both the houses that line the reserve and the local Purpose Reserve itself are very limited and restricted to very limited gaps in the riparian vegetation. With the addition of the esplanade reserve along the south banks of Kaikainui and the additional planting as proposed by the application, the visual effect of the new development itself will be considered **low to moderate** for most and **moderate** from the two-storey buildings while views of the development areas remain possible. This impact would be offset by the **positive** impacts that would stem from the further

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<sup>21</sup> With the introduction of MDR zones within in Kaiapoi, it is anticipated that this 'new look' development will initially receive mixed reactions but become more accepted with time. This is potentially an impact that is outside the scope of this application. In addition to use the term medium to describe a development density of potentially 200m<sup>2</sup> can be misleading in a rural context as traditional development (with sections around 600m<sup>2</sup>) is familiar and is already considered to be relatively dense

- development of the esplanade reserve and the connectivity opportunities being proposed.
- 101 The density of the existing planting along the site's southern boundary and within the reserve area, means that the impact of the development on the neighbouring lot to the south will be **very low**.
- 102 When viewed from MNR, the cycle track and the properties to the west of MNR, when possible, the ODP will result in a substantial change to the site and the loss of remaining low rural qualities, however some of these losses could be expected as a result of the changes proposed by the pWDP.
- 103 With the development of the ODP, the primary effect would be the loss of low to moderate rural qualities, and this being replaced by a significant (and unfamiliar) increase in development density and compounded to a degree with the changes that will apply to permitted building forms. Left unmitigated, such a change would have a **moderate-high** impact on the amenity values of this area.
- 104 However, with the comprehensive nature of the development now filling an area with robust physical boundaries and a sense of infill rather than sprawl will contribute a level of purpose and 'appropriateness' to development in this area. The southern extent of Kaiapoi will move from Kaikainui Stream south to another robust natural boundary, Courtenay Stream.
- 105 If one then adds to this the positive consequences of the development and planting within the esplanade setbacks, the planting proposed around the site and in particular the 10m set back with planting proposed along Main North Road and the restrictions that are proposed for some development around the perimeter of the site, this will provide good mitigation to the perceived adverse visual impacts of higher density development.
- 106 A feature of the ODP will be the **positive** outcomes that will stem from the long-term development of the parkway entrance into South Kaiapoi even when compared to existing compromised visual amenity values.

## Landscape Effects

- 107 *"A landscape effect is a consequence of changes in a landscape's physical attributes on that landscape's values. Change is not an effect as landscapes are constantly changing. It is the implications of change on landscape values that is relevant."*<sup>22</sup>.
- 108 It is important to appreciate that change to the character of a landscape is not necessarily adverse. Whether effects are adverse or not depends largely on public expectation of what can be reasonably anticipated to occur in the landscape and the level of integration that can be achieved to make the new development appear 'appropriate', in other words an accepted or supported part of a growing urban precinct. To this end a purposeful and considered development extending to a robust natural boundary that provided meaningful benefits can be considered preferential when compared to what would otherwise be perceived as the domestication of low-quality rural land that can be perceived as unplanned development sprawl.

### Landscape Effects of Permitted Development *under the pWDP*

- 109 The pWDP anticipates a character and outcome associated with the RL Zoning of the site. Under the RL zoning, a compartmentalised landscape of 4 hectare blocks, with a fragmented grain of rural residential development could result which is consistent with what can currently occur under the Operative District Plan. While this contrasts with the existing agricultural land comprising most of the existing site, most of the landscape immediately surrounding the site and Kaiapoi South has already been developed into 'non rural' activities.<sup>23</sup>
- 110 The pWDP proposed zoning will replace an area of 'limited rural amenity' with an area of 'limited rural-residential amenity'. Both of these represent a departure of sorts from the sites' wider context and adding to the apparent fragmentation of what is essentially a peri urban<sup>24</sup> landscape.

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<sup>22</sup> *'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines', July 2022. Page 61.*

<sup>23</sup> Confirming the BM observation of *'it is noted that business activities such as construction and manufacturing are also developing in this character area'*.

<sup>24</sup> A 'Peri-urban area' describes the rural—urban transition zone where urban and rural uses mix and often clash.

111 Due to the constraints of the site, as discussed above and in Mr Dunhams evidence, rural activity and therefore any positive contribution that will be made to rural character values on the smaller sites will be limited, and the environmental benefits that would stem from the additional work being proposed by the application would not eventuate.

#### Landscape Effects of the Proposed ODP

112 The rezoning of the site into residential, from an urban design perspective my colleague Mr Singh describes the site as being " ... *the land is well located and well-suited for MDRZ. The proposed rezoning would provide a logical extension of the adjoining MDRZ north of the Site.*"<sup>25</sup>.

113 In addition to the urban design and transport planning, ecological and environmental support given to the development provided by other expert witnesses, essentially the proposed ODP has been designed as a 'best practice' example of MDR development with strategies proposed to ensure that integration into its existing semi mature context is assured (albeit with evidence of change). In addition, the wider locality will benefit from an improved and integrated open space network that meshes well with those adjacent.

114 While the proposed MDR zoning and development in accordance with the ODP will give rise to a perceived dense fine grain of residential development when compared to a permitted development under the proposed RL rezoning, residential development in this area is a logical expansion of the Kaiapoi South settlement. The proposed ODP has been carefully designed to best integrate with its surrounding context and entrance into Kaiapoi South.

115 Despite the increased density in development the setbacks around site the perimeter of the site will maintain a level of open space and contribute positive amenity values to this locality. Rural character values in this location will be lost, however they were not considered to be of high value.

116 The proposed ODP will result in positive landscape effects associated with the naturalisation of the margins of streams with riparian planting, an extension to the

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<sup>25</sup> Statement of Evidence – Vikramjit Singh – Conclusion pg 21

recreational network and the enhancement of the parkway landscape that is developing along Main North Road and within the SMA while at the same time accommodating modern 'best practice' expansion of the residential capacity of Kaiapoi.

- 117 Given this, the adverse effects on rural landscape values will be **moderate** (essentially by their removal) however these will be replaced by **positive urban and environmental character values** that will endure and be more widely appreciated.

#### **ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE RELEVANT PLANNING PROVISIONS**

- 118 The following is an assessment of proposed MDR zoning and ODP against the relevant landscape provisions outlined in the earlier part of my evidence under the heading Relevant Planning Provisions namely the objective and policies of the RLZ.

#### **RLZ Zone Provisions**

- 119 The following RLZ objectives and policies are relevant to the proposed application site.

##### ***Objective RLZ-O1 Purpose of the Rural Lifestyle Zone***

Response: The proposed ODP will not cater for or provide opportunity for primary production activities as anticipated by the RL zone. From the evidence provided by others, it is understood that the limitations in area, the quality of the soil and the potential the site has to inundation, compromises the productive qualities of the site.

##### ***Policy RLZ-P1 Character of the Rural Lifestyle Zone***

Response: While the rural lifestyle zone anticipates 'small rural lots' and 'residential units, fencing and domestic planting' the resulting density will be a significant departure to that anticipated by the zone. With the density as proposed this will find the built form within the development dominating over open space. The setbacks as proposed, along with the limitations placing the large lots around the periphery of the site and limiting building heights within these lots, will preserve to a degree, open space values as advocated by the RL Zone.

##### ***Policy RLZ-P2 Activities in the Rural Lifestyle Zone***

Response: An ambition of the zone is to '*retain opportunities for land to be used for primary production*' and more pertinent to the application "*avoiding new sites being created, or residential units being erected on sites, that are less than 4ha*" Given the

density of the proposed ODP and the use of the word 'avoid' regarding further subdivision, the application is counter to this policy.

*Subdivision Provisions*

The following subdivision objectives and policies are relevant to the proposed RL zoning and ODP for the site:

***Objective SUB-01 Subdivision design***

Response: As described under the Proposal section of my evidence, the proposed ODP has been carefully designed to maximise the variety of opportunities that the site as well as responding positively to its various neighbours. As a subdivision, the ODP will comply with all the ambitions of best practice and this objective.

***Objectives SUB-02 Infrastructure and transport and SUB-03 Esplanade reserves and esplanade strips;***

Response: The ODP is fully consistent with this objective.

***Policies SUB-P1 Design and amenity; SUB-P2 Allotment layout, size and dimension and SUB-P3 Sustainable design; SUB-P4 Integration and connectivity;***

Response: The ODP is fully consistent with these policies.

***Policy SUB-P5 Density in Residential Zones***

Response: The ODP will provide for a variety of sizes within this area, while this is inconsistent with the RL zone, this would be consistent should the application to rezone is successful.

***Policies SUB-P6 Criteria for Outline Development Plans and SUB-P7 Requirements of Outline Development Plans***

An ODP is presented as part of the application and is therefore consistent with this policy.

***Policies SUB-P8 Infrastructure; SUB-P9 Access to, protection and enhancement of the margins of water bodies; and SUB-P10 Esplanade reserves and esplanade strips***

Response: The subdivision plan as illustrated by the ODP is fully consistent with the ambitions of these policies,



## CONCLUSION

- 120 The application is for the rezoning of 14.2Ha of land south of the residential boundary of Kaiapoi South
- 121 My evidence assesses the rezoning of the land located adjacent Main Road North and forming the southern entrance into Kaiapoi. The land is currently zoned RL Zone and the application seeks a MDR Zone under the pWDP. The application includes an ODP which has been designed to align with the MDR provisions.
- 122 At a broad scale, the proposed rezoning is considered a strategic expansion of Kaiapoi settlement, infilling a gap between existing residential development north of the site and industrial land to the south. The site is also bounded by Kaikainui Stream (North), the Courtenay Stream (South) and from Main North Road (west) to the main trunk line (east), all robust permanent boundaries.
- 123 The MDR zone is a significant departure from the RL zone. The ODP illustrates an intensive residential development (that is consistent with an MDR zone) and replacing a 3lot rural residential 4.00ha subdivision.
- 124 The naturalness values of the application site are considered to be **low** with rural character values **moderate-low** due to the context of the site.
- 125 With the rezoning and subsequent development of the ODP or something comparable, the primary effect would be the loss of low to moderate rural qualities, and this being replaced by:
- a significant increase in development density (ie the provision of houses).
  - a green amenity and recreational framework for the area that compliments and extends the existing green network.
  - Extends and enhances the developing 'parkway' character of Main Road North as part of the southern entrance into Kaiapoi.

126 These developments will have **positive** urban landscape outcomes<sup>26</sup> and provides an opportunity for the development of a new residential area that constitutes best practice while at the same time providing a precedent for retaining the long term important character values that will endure within what is an evolving peri urban landscape.

Rory Langbridge

7 March 2024

**APPENDIX A:**Table 1: Landscape and Visual Effects Rating Scale<sup>27</sup>

Very Low	Low	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	High	Very High
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**APPENDIX B:**

Graphic Attachment to Statement of combined Landscape (Rory Langbridge) and Urban Design (Vikramjit Singh) Evidence

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<sup>27</sup> The seven-point scale of very low to very high is in accordance with the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Te Tangi a te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, April 2021.