

BEFORE THE WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW HEARINGS PANEL

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF the hearing of submissions and further submissions on the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan

AND

hearing of submissions and further submissions on Variations 1 and 2 to the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan

Hearing Stream 12E: Rezoning Requests

**FIRST STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MATTHEW NEIL CHARLES LESTER
(LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT)
FOR RICHARD AND GEOFF SPARK
(PDP SUBMITTER 183 / VARIATION 1 SUBMITTER 61)**

Dated 4 March 2024

Aston Consultants Limited
Resource Management and Planning
PO Box 1435
Christchurch

Attention: Fiona Aston
Phone: 0275 332213
Email: fiona@astonconsultants.co.nz

Counsel instructed:
David Caldwell, Barrister
Bridgeside Chambers
PO Box 3180
Christchurch

Phone: 021 221 4113
Email: dcc@bridgeside.co.nz

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. My evidence assesses the landscape implications of the proposed rezoning of approximately 62 hectares (ha) of land to a Medium Density Residential Zone (MRZ).
2. An ODP (Boys Road ODP) has been developed by the submitter that slightly revises the South East Rangiora Development Plan (SERDP) occupying the northern part of the site (Block A) and provides a comprehensive outline layout for the remaining (southern) part of the site (Blocks B and C), refer to GA Sheets 7, 8, 9.
3. The existing landscape values of the site are based around the rural character of the northern part of the site, the existing North Brook and Middle Brook that run through the site and the valuable cultural and historic narrative that can be revealed from the site. The Boys Road ODP proposals provide a comprehensive landscape framework relating to connectivity, blue and green space, urban design opportunities and community facilities for generating positive landscape outcomes.
4. My evidence includes a series of recommendations made to deal with issues of landscape sensitivity, but these can be appropriately dealt with as part of the subdivision stage of the process. These relate to: an arborist's report to retain the trees or their equivalents in the northern part of the site, adjacent to the North Brook; a cultural and historical narrative be developed for the site in association with MKL and the Spark family; boundary treatments between the site and existing residential neighbours be developed to address landscape effects for those neighbours; streetscape plans for the proposal's two key roads be developed to confirm the surrounding landscape and infrastructure treatments and their landscape effects.
5. It is my opinion that the proposed Boys Road ODP, accompanying urban design evidence and the recommendations in this evidence, the proposal can be supported from a visual and landscape effects perspective. This is because the landscape effects of the proposal are similar to the SERDP for Block A, the landscape effects of the of the proposal are mitigated by the pWDP proposed rezoning and REL for Blocks B and C, and the proposed ODP offers positive landscape effects through its comprehensive nature.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE

6. My name is Matthew Neil Charles Lester. I am a Senior Landscape Architect and shareholder with Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects (RMM) (formerly Rough & Milne Landscape Architects), which is a Christchurch-based landscape architect consultancy that was established in 2010.

7. I hold a Bachelor of Science (Geography) from Canterbury University and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture (Lincoln University) and am a Registered Member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects. I have 30 years post graduate experience.
8. I am currently involved in a range of planning, consent and design projects across New Zealand, principally in the north east of the South Island. I have extensive residential subdivision design and planning experience including Ravenswood, Te Whariki at Lincoln, Halswell Commons and Knights Stream at Halswell. I am currently working on proposed Waimakariri District Plan (pWDP) submissions for this project and Stokes Land at Waikuku as well as previous plan change projects such as Tekapo Campground (now Station Bay Residential Development) in Tekapo via the Mackenzie District Council (PC 16).

CODE OF CONDUCT

9. While this is not an Environment Court proceeding, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses set out in the of the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I have complied with the Code of Conduct in preparing this evidence and will continue to comply with it while giving oral evidence. Except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person, this written evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in this evidence.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

Assessment Methodology

10. The methodology and terminology used in this report has been informed by the Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (Tuia Pita Ora, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022).
11. I have been engaged by the applicant to visit and assess the proposal site and its landscape context and prepare an assessment of visual and landscape effects for the proposed residential development, based primarily on the Outline Development Plan (ODP), Design Narrative and draft Urban Design Report supplied by Nicole Lauenstein of A + Urban. From this I provide this evidence assessing the proposal to rezone the site according to the Boys Road ODP.
12. I have visited on several different occasions (January 17, 2024, February 13, 2024) where the site was viewed from the surrounding public roads of Northbrook, Boys,

Marsh, Dunlops and Gefkins, from the public walkways adjacent to North Brook and from the grounds of the Northbrook Museum and Rossburn Function Centre on Spark Lane.

13. The proposed ODP and the related landscape issues have been discussed and explained by Ms Lauenstein and there has been one project meeting with the other consultants in addition to email contact for project updates and general communication. There has been no external communication by myself with external or public stakeholders. The landscape and visual assessment is provided with limited external input apart from coordination and verification of matters assessed in order to maintain professional objectivity.

Scope of Evidence

14. The topics covered in my evidence include:
 - (a) Description of the site;
 - (b) The proposal;
 - (c) The relevant policy provisions;
 - (d) Description of the receiving environment;
 - (e) Assessment of visual and landscape effects;
 - (f) Assessment against the relevant policy provisions; and
 - (g) Conclusion.
15. In preparing this evidence, I have reviewed:
 - (a) Draft Statement of Evidence of Nicole Lauenstein (Urban Design) (**UDE**) and draft Urban Design Report. That evidence and draft report reference the following reports.
 - (b) Ecology
 - (c) Planning
 - (d) Engineering
 - (e) Traffic

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

16. The Site that is proposed for residential subdivision is under a number of titles but is part of a farm owned by the Spark family, currently used for dairy farming. The part of the at land that applies to this proposal covers just over 62 ha¹ and is outlined on the Graphic Attachment (GA) Sheet 11. It comprises land north of Boys Road, bounded by the North Brook and associated wetlands and Northbrook Waters residential development to the west. South of Boys Road the Site is bounded by the proposed Rangiora Eastern Link Road (REL) to the east and south and by the varied edge of southeastern Rangiora township to the west. This comprises a variety of rural residential properties, the railway line and an existing Waimakariri District Council (WDC) Hegan Reserve, refer to GA Sheet 12 for site photo locations.
17. In the oWDP the land is zoned rural and in the pWDP it zoned rural lifestyle (RLZ) with a general residential overlay covering the area north of Boys Road, refer to GA Sheet 7. That land is within the WDC South East Rangiora Development Area Development Plan (SERDP), refer to GA Sheet 8.

Landform and Landcover

18. The site is generally flat, sloping gradually down to the south east as is shown by the existing hydrology. This is revealed by the direction of flow of the North and Middle Brooks. The soil type is generally Temuka deep silt over clay, with permeability being constrained by the clay layer below. The area also has a complex groundwater structure related to its proximity the Ashley/Rakahuri River to the north, the clay layer and historical overland flow paths.
19. The North Brook flows through the north of the site, in part forming the northern boundary. Here it follows it's natural alignment, winding it's way to the south east and beyond the site via a culvert under Boys Road, refer to GA Sheet 21. The Middle Brook flows through the rural residential properties west of the southern part of the site before becoming channelised between existing paddocks to run in a series of straight lines until meeting Marsh Road opposite the existing WDC oxidation ponds.
20. As a dairy farm the ground cover is predominantly grass paddocks, although there are a variety of other seasonal, alternative feed crops currently being grown. There is a noticeable presence of mature trees in the northern part of the site, running along the

¹ Assuming a change to the REL alignment.

North Brook, refer to GA Sheet 15. These are tall (up to approx. 30 metres), mature exotic specimens (poplar, pine, willow, macrocarpa) which add mature rural character to this location, but are not high value species or specimens in their own right. North of the North Brook, along the proposal site boundary is a line of mature oaks, that are of value in this landscape both due to their species and as specimens, refer to GA Sheet 12. The remainder of the area north of Boys Road contains sporadic, utilitarian tree species and some existing shelter hedges, refer to GA Sheet 16.

21. On the south side of Boys Road there is very little on site planting except for several isolated utilitarian rural trees, some shelter belts and a line of more recent, roadside planting, immediately south of Boys Road, comprising native shrub and small tree species interspersed with young oak trees refer to GA Sheet 15.
22. The ecology of the North Brook and Middle Brook are described in the urban design evidence of Ms Lauenstein.²
23. The receiving environment continues the landform described above. The landcover is split between the mix of the rural open paddocks and shelter and more enclosed rural residential areas to the east, and the well established town boundary immediately to the west. Both the North Brook and Middle Brook continue to flow to the south east where they flow into the Cam River/ Ruataniwha.

Land Use, Structures and Existing Features

24. As noted, the Site is currently a dairy farm. There are a number of support buildings present on the site. South of Boys Road there are two modest houses with accompanying sheds and curtilage. Immediately north of Boys Road there is a retired older cow shed, related yards and a modest house. These will all be removed under the proposal.
25. The main buildings on the Site are the existing Spark homestead, Northbrook Museum and Rossburn Function Centre which are owned and run as one entity. These buildings will be retained as part of the proposal and are a well established part of the Rangiora social landscape.
26. The North Brook and to a lesser degree the Middle Brook are the main landscape features of the site. The North Brook and the associated wetlands are a well used walking resource to the north of the site with extensive native plantings.
27. To the east of the Site the landscape character of the receiving environment is one of familiar, pleasant rural countryside, as a result of dairy farming. The finer grain rural

² Statement of Evidence of Nicole Lauenstein (Urban Design)

residential land use is now an accepted and also familiar part of this picture. These appear in locations such as Tuahiwi, Rangiora Woodend Road and lower Gressons Road. Another feature of this wider landscape, particularly further east of the site is the visibility of new townships in what were rural outlooks. This applies to Ravenswood viewed from Gressons Road and Pegasus viewed from State Highway 1.

Views to the Site and Description of Existing Edges

28. Given it's current use, there is no public access onto the site, apart from onto the museum site. Public views to the site are from the following locations, Northbrook Road, the Northbrook Wetlands Loop Track, Boys Road, Marsh Road, Gefkins and Dunlops Roads and from Hegan Reserve over the railway track. The views from private land are from the museum site and from several neighbouring properties along the southwest boundary of the proposal site, refer to GA Sheet 11.
29. From Northbrook Road there are glimpsed views to the north end of the proposal site (Block A) across open paddocks at a distance of 170 metres approximately, refer to GA Sheet 14. There is also a distant view south over the stormwater reserve adjacent to Spark Lane, but this view will in the future be dominated by the REL, planned for 2029 .
30. From the Northbrook Wetlands Loop Track, there are narrow glimpses to the site where the existing dense native vegetation allows. On a single journey around this track I had to leave the track in order to get any sort of view to, or over the Site.
31. Boys Road allows the main views to the site, looking both north and south. To the north, the site is relatively open to the road, refer to GA Sheet 16. However, this land is already identified for future development so the pertinent issue becomes one of the appropriateness of the proposed edge treatment rather than the existing degree of visibility.
32. Looking south the site has an open character and is noticeably rural but these views are partially screened by the existing mixed roadside planting, refer to GA Sheet 15, noting that the photograph was taken within the proposal site, south of the roadside planting. The views to this part of the site will be affected by the REL which will be located approximately 100 metres to the west of the photo location.
33. Views from Marsh Road are currently unobstructed offering clear views towards the site, although this is a much less frequented route than Boys Road, being gravel and used to access the WDC oxidation ponds in addition to two residential properties before intersecting with Camside Road, another small, gravel road. Gefkins and Dunlops roads are short no exit local roads that provide access to a number of lifestyle properties over

the railway line. These lifestyle properties currently appear to have partially screened views to the site through mature existing established garden vegetation. One of the properties at 21 Gefkins Road currently has open views to the east over the site, refer to GA, Sheet 17. One other small, rural holding on the edge of Rangiora, between the site and railway line at 287 Boys Road currently has views to the site screened by existing boundary planting along their eastern boundary.

34. The above information helps describe the existing edge treatments in the southwestern corner along the Rangiora town edge. These boundaries are a mix of mature rural and large established garden boundary plantings within a the variety of larger existing lifestyle and farm existing properties as described. The southeastern boundary of the proposal site will be defined by the REL and is currently open farmland. In the northwestern quarter of the site, the edges boundaries are consistently densely planted, being with tall established eucalyptus and pine trees along the Northbrook Waters lifestyle estate edge (refer to GA Sheet 15) and then lower but consistent dense native planting along the North Brook boundary, refer to GA, Sheets 15,16. In the northeast, the proposal site bounds open paddocks, which are part of the SERDP, and the North Brook with its mature planting as earlier described. South of Boys Road in this area the site is bounded by the rural open pastoral character of the existing dairy farm, with existing farm house and farm sheds interspersing interspersed with rural shelter plantings and open space.

Landscape Values of the Site and Receiving Environment

Physical (natural and human influences)

35. The Site has varied physical landscape values centred around open space, established trees and the presence of water courses. Natural character varies between moderate to high value in association with the existing water courses.

Associative (Community, Cultural and Historical associations with the site)

36. The proposal site has moderate high associative values due to the existing museum and function centre as part of the European settlement of the area and Rangiora community. There are also mana whenua associations with the general area that are yet to be defined. Both of these offer the opportunity to further explore and improve the associative values of the site as part of the site narrative.

Perceptual (experiential and sensory perception of the site)

37. The existing experience of the site is mainly via the journey and the view from Boys Road. This currently offers moderate high associative perceptual landscape values when

looking to the north. The same experience of the southern part of the site has low associative landscape value as the landscape contains less of the pleasant rural character described and is partially screened from Boys Road. There is currently no public access to the site and so the perceptual value of the site is from public space, except for the outlooks described from the private land along the south western fringe of the site. The values associated with this outlook are moderate, but a small number of residents are affected and current pWDP proposes RLZ which has been described in this evidence as having a more visually enclosed character (through boundary shelter) than the existing dairying land use.

THE PROPOSAL

Introduction

38. The following description references the key landscape elements of the Boys Road ODP and UDE. Detailed descriptions of the proposal itself and various technical issues are covered elsewhere as described in paragraph 16 of this evidence. The Graphic Attachment shows the Boys Road ODP and a supporting Concept Plan which set out the broad spatial concepts behind the ODP, refer to GA Sheets 9, 10. The UDE describes the proposal being set out according to sets of primary and secondary drivers. The primary drivers are hydrology, blue green connectivity and visual connections to the wider landscape. The secondary drivers include a community based narrative, fine grained internal and external connections and spatial sensitivity to the surrounding context. For the purpose of description, the proposal is split into three blocks, A – C, refer GA Sheets 7, 9.
39. Block A – This area is within the SERDP. The proposal comprises varied density residential development, roadway connections to Boys Road and the REL, a community hub, links to existing and proposed blue green corridors and stormwater management areas (SMA) along Boys Road and at the southeastern corner as shown on the Boys Road ODP.
40. Block B – This area is the central part of the subject site south of Boys Road where a landscape change to ‘urban’ has not been anticipated. This part of the proposal site within the area identified for possible future business land growth covers an area west of the proposed Rangiora Eastern Link Road (REL) to the existing Rangiora township boundary, refer to GA Sheet 9, 10. This will comprise varied density residential development, roadway connections to Boys Road and the REL, pedestrian and cycle connectivity, a central reserve, an SMA in the southern portion with stormwater

conveyance treatment along much of the site's western boundary, facing existing residential development.

41. Block C – This is the southern and smallest part of the site where possible light industrial and ecological space is planned north and west of the REL. The ecological space is proposed around the Middle Brook and the light industrial area may be accessed from the REL.
42. One aspect of the development that does not fit easily into the criteria below is the proposed site works and resulting levels for lot platforms and infrastructure. The proposal is for the purpose of this submission working to a conventional engineering approach which see lot levels approximately 400mm higher than existing ground in the west of the development, 700mm higher in the east and have the northeastern SMA bunded approximately 2000mm above existing ground. I do note from on site observation that Boys Road sits approximately 500mm above the surrounding farmland. As currently proposed the visual effects siteworks and levels will have low visual effects for the residential lots and low moderate visual effects for the stormwater bund when viewed from Boys Road. This degree of effect can be effectively mitigated through landscape treatment and consideration as part of the overall design of Boys Road.

Density

43. The proposed density of the residential component of the proposal was 12 lots per hectare minimum. Through the recent pWDP officer recommendation 15 lots per hectare (net) is now the proposed required minimum. Ms Lauenstein notes that this detail has not been worked through for the proposal and that the final density will be affected by issues such as public space.
44. The Boys Road Concept Plan shows a variation in lot density. The plan shows denser lots through the central area of the proposal in both Block A and B, refer to GA Sheet 10. This allows larger lots on the southwestern fringe of the site, adjoining the existing Rangiora town edge and in the northeast of the proposed development where the site adjoins existing open farm land and the North Brook. Whatever is the outcome regarding lot density, this proposed variation in development density mitigates effects on the wider landscape and follows good urban design practice.

Connection and Blue Green Networks

45. One significant element of the proposed development is the proposed REL. This defines the eastern edge of the development in Blocks B and C and is the central connection through Block A. Under the proposal, the REL adjacent to the Blocks B and C will form

a boundary with the RLZ. The treatment for this in the UDE is described as a key urban road with avenue trees. This treatment is recommended to be part of a comprehensive planting framework for the site which will be an important aspect of reflecting appropriate landscape character and enhancing landscape values.

46. The Concept Plan shows a comprehensive roading network within the site that varies to suit the geometry of the surrounding landscape or boundary conditions, with a dense, small scale pattern in the denser lot, central area and larger scale, simpler roads towards the external boundaries. The degree of connectivity to the major roads has been well considered in terms of landscape effects with minimal direct connections onto the REL at Block B, bundled access across a proposed water conveyance channel north of Boys Road, increasingly rural treatment of Boys Road as it merges with rural surroundings to the east and denser treatment around the REL at its northern extent within the development. All of these responses have the potential to enhance landscape values through variation of urban character and experience of the site.
47. The UDE describes an extensive framework of pedestrian and cycle connections throughout the site. This is partly based on the roading network and partly on a series of reserve spaces that run through the proposal ODP. One important part is an extension of the existing walking tracks around the North Brook and Wetlands Loop Track. This is proposed to continue along the North Brook and would complement a future connection to Kaiapoi as described above. The network is also directly linked to the blue green network and reserves described below. This connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists will improve the experience, and hence the perceptual landscape values of the site.
48. The connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists overlaps with the blue green network for the Site which is well described in the UDE. This network includes walkway reserves separate but complementary to the road network, broad landscaped berms for the key roads, stormwater conveyance along the southwest Site boundaries, includes proposed neighbourhood reserves, proposed and existing community hubs and esplanade reserves around both brooks. From a landscape values perspective these offer the opportunity to improve physical values through habitat and tree protection, associative values through site identity and important site narratives as discussed in the UDE and perceptual values through site experience as described above.

Landscape Attributes and Sites of Significance

49. The main existing attributes of the site are associated with the North Brook and Middle Brook, the existing museum and function complex, the rural character of the northern part of the site comprising the existing large trees along the North Brook and the farming

history of the site. The cultural history and narratives are as yet uncharted because input has not yet been obtained from Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited (MKL).

50. Both the North Brook and Middle Brook will be protected and have ecological opportunities and habitat values enhanced under this proposal. The museum and function centre are an integral part of the proposal and are linked to the proposed commercial hub.
51. The trees along the North Brook contribute significantly to the landscape character of the proposal site. It is my recommendation that these trees be assessed by a qualified arborist and a long term management plan developed to retain these trees as a feature within the landscape and complement the other goals for the proposal.
52. The Urban Design evidence notes that consultation with Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited (MKL) has been halted until all of the submission information is available. Once this is recommenced there will be opportunity to start that narrative and explore how that intertwines with the other values and features of the site including the social and historical stories centred around past land uses.

RELEVANT POLICY PROVISIONS

53. The following provisions are relevant to the proposed rezoning as they are contained within the pWDP. The pWDP Strategic Directions, Objectives and Policies give effect to the higher order documents as required by the RMA.
54. Further issues are raised under the Our Environment chapter which seeks to “Identify biodiversity issues and opportunities, protect our natural environment, continue to work with Ngai Tuahuriri to identify and classify wahi tapu and wahi taonga” (WDDS, 13).
55. The provisions pertinent to this submission within the pWDP related to district wide landscape matters are as follows:
 - (a) Subdivision Objectives and Policies
 - Subdivision Design (SUB-O1)
 - Esplanade Reserves and Esplanade Strips (SUB-O3)
 - Design and Amenity (SUB-P1)
 - Integration and Connectivity (SUB-P4)
 - Density in Residential Zones (SUB-P5)

- Criteria for Outline Development Plans (SUB-P6)
 - Access to, Protection and Enhancement of the Margins of Water Bodies (SUB-P9)
 - Esplanade Reserves and Esplanade Strips (SUB-P10)
- (b) Strategic Directions Objectives
- Natural Environment (SD-O1)
 - Urban Development (SD-O2)
 - Ngai Tahu Mana Whenua/Te Ngai Tuahuriri Runanga (SD-O5)
- (c) Historic and Cultural Values Objectives
- Contribution to the District (HH-O1)

ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL AND LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Potential Issues

56. The potential visual and landscape effects are the visibility of the proposal when seen from Boys Road, the change in character from existing rural to residential and the protection and enhancement of the existing landscape values. However, an assessment of these effects must consider the context. The area north of Boys Road already having a Residential Zone Overlay and the SERDP, in addition to the pWDP which proposed to rezone the southern part of the site to RLZ and the proposed effect the REL will have on existing landscape values.

Assessment of Visibility and Visual Effects

*“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”.*³

57. The key views to the site are obtained from Boys Road to the north and south and views from the existing residences along the southwestern boundary of the site.

³ Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (Tuia Pita Ora, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022)

58. When looking north from Boys Road the proposed development will be visible and the view prolonged. However, under the pWDP this part of the site has already been identified for future residential development. In that sense visual effects from residential development northwards from Boys Road are anticipated by the plan. There will be a change but in the context, I consider any visual effects are less than minor..
59. The view to the south of Boys Road is partially screened at present although a change in land use from rural or RLZ to residential would be noticeable and a moderate high effect on landscape character. However this must be set against the change / effects that would arise from both the planned REL and the RLZ under the pWDP for the site. Both of these will be highly visible when viewed from Boys Road, so the question is not the visibility but the change in character and resulting effects on landscape and amenity values. The REL will have an urban character and the RLZ will enable, and in this context is likely to result in, a compartmentalised or enclosed rural landscape.. Both of these factors reduce the visual effect of the proposed change from moderate high to low moderate.
60. The view of the proposed site from the existing residences southwest of the Site are the most affected private views of the proposal. These eight properties typically have large gardens or paddocks to the north or east adjoining the Site. The Boys Road ODP shows a large SMA east of the Gefkins and Dunlops Road, to adjoin the REL. This essentially mitigates the outlook from these private properties and provides an outlook not dissimilar to that of the existing open farmland and hence has a low effect. In addition, the ODP shows a planted buffer along part of this boundary. Further south of this area, on the south side of Dunlops Road there is a planted buffer in the west and an ecological reserve is proposed along the Middle Brook in the east. This will reduce potential effects on landscape and visual amenity to a low moderate and low, respectively, visual effect. With the more northern property, 287 Boys Road, the proposal shows a stormwater conveyance channel of approximately 10 metres wide on the property's eastern boundary. This will provide a buffer to the residential development but will still create a moderate visual effect.
61. The UDE discusses various planting scenarios along these boundaries. In this instance it is my recommendation that at an appropriate stage in the design process, these boundary treatments be further defined to achieve the following: planted screening to 1.8 metres with accompanying small to medium trees (maximum height 5.0 metres) to create consistent low screening and partial filtering at least of adjacent new residential buildings where this is proposed.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

“A landscape effect is an outcome for a landscape value. ... Change itself is not an effect: landscapes change constantly. It is the implications of change on landscape values that is relevant.”⁴

62. In this instance the assessment of landscape effects are based around the change in landscape character from rural to residential. As stated above, the effects arising from this change are lessened and must be seen in the context of the pWDP including the residential development overlay and SERDP in the pWDP for the area north of Boys Road and the REL and RLZ zoning for the area to the south. The potential effects are described under each Block outlined below.
63. The Boys Road ODP follows the SERDP in principle with several changes to the main connection framework, consisting of realigning the REL and removing one traffic bridge connection over the North Brook. These changes have landscape benefits in terms of connecting to the wider landscape and creating a more compatible ecological and social environment for the North Brook. The Site attributes (being the North Brook and the museum) with high landscape values are not impacted by the proposal and they will be enhanced. There are comprehensive blue green networks that combine well with pedestrian cycle networks and stormwater connections. In summary, in my opinion this is a logical development from the SERDP with several effective improvements in terms of landscape values.
64. The development of Block B offers the most significant change from the RLZ but the REL forms a strong boundary containing residential development. In general Block B has less attributes and a lower landscape values than Block A with limited rural amenity and natural character such as that offered by the water courses and large existing trees. The REL will isolate a pocket of land that will have a distinct eastern boundary and be a logical extension of the already planned Block A. The Block B proposal proposes a well planned transport connection framework and a comprehensive blue green network that combines with pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the wider township and stormwater conveyance and treatment. In comparison, under the pWDP the proposed RLZ would compartmentalise the landscape and will be unlikely to afford opportunity for a blue green network and connection to the wider Rangiora urban development. In my opinion the proposed rezoning to MRZ will offer a comprehensively planned residential development,

⁴ *‘Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines’*. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

acceptable landscape effects and long term benefits of a well planned contiguous residential development.

65. Block C is proposed as a light industrial zone incorporating an ecological reserve surrounding the Middle Brook. This is proposed in an area of low existing landscape values and will be contained both physically and visually on the south side by the REL. In this sense, Block C will capitalise on the opportunity provided by the location of the REL to provide industrial / commercial facilities that will be easily accessible via the REL and more or less contiguous with the industrial zone existing at Southbrook combined with the ecological reserve, which will provide landscape benefits to offset development resulting in minimal adverse effects on the landscape.
66. In terms of addressing the physical, associative and perceptual values of the site, the following summary is provided. The existing physical values are found principally in the rural and natural character expressed by an open pastoral character, mature trees and existing water courses that also contribute to the perceptual values particularly found in the north part of the site. The proposal will afford protection and enhancement to these landscape values as shown by the Boys Road ODP, which incorporates a comprehensive and extensive blue green network links combined with recreational opportunities. The associative values are represented by the cultural narrative and farming history of the site, which are in part captured by the museum and with consultation with Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited the opportunity to highlight a cultural narrative over the site to maintain and or benefit associative values.
67. Changes to rural and natural character are inevitable on any proposal of this nature. Landscape change is not an effect in itself as landscapes are always changing. It is the effects of the change that are important. In the overall context, they are appropriate.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE RELEVANT POLICY PROVISIONS

68. The relevant provisions for the proposed rezoning are under the pWDP Part 2 – District Wide Matters that relate to Strategic Directions, Historic and Cultural Values and Subdivision. In summary these focus on:
 - Best practice subdivision design, consolidating urban development while retaining urban character;
 - The provision of esplanade reserves and using landscape to manage reverse sensitivity effects;
 - Providing ODP's for proposed residential development;

- Provide a net gain in indigenous ecosystems and habitat;
 - Provides best practice urban development including recognising existing character and amenity values;
 - Recognises Te Ngai Tuahuriri Runanga's role in the management of natural and physical resources, and;
 - Recognises, protects and maintains the district's historic heritage.
69. Larger lots are planned towards the existing edges and there is effective buffering and large SMA areas along the southeastern boundary which will lessen the landscape character and visual effects of the proposal. The roading framework, varied lot density, streetscape and blue green network proposals will also help mitigate the effects of the density. Although a specific assessment of effects is not possible related to urban density at this time it should be noted that the ODP is well structured to manage landscape effects and the eventual density of the proposal will be in line with other future residential developments in the district.
70. The proposal has an ODP which conforms to the requirements of pWDP. This particularly relates roading, community facilities, management of stormwater systems, environmental or landscape protection and enhancement, identification of existing features, pedestrian and cycle ways and minimisation of reverse sensitivity.
71. The ODP also sets out protection and enhancement of indigenous ecosystems and habitat. The transport network is efficient, is looking to accommodate public transport, connects well both internally and externally and prioritises walking and cycling. The existing character and amenity are well recognised in the proposal ODP and augmented or protected.
72. Te Ngai Tuahuriri Runanga's role in the management of natural and physical resources has been recognised in the UDE through MKL. In addition to this the intention to create a narrative based mana whenua input and the historic heritage of the site offer the opportunity respect and illustrate the character and landscape values of the site.

CONCLUSION

73. This residential development proposal for this site is a combination of refining and developing an existing WDC ODP and continuing that proposed development onto land further south to capitalise on the opportunity provided by the proposed REL. The visual and landscape effects of this are in line with the existing WDC ODP or are well mitigated

and offers landscape benefits in connectivity, urban quality and protection of existing landscape features. In general the proposal is consistent with the landscape provisions of the pWDP.

74. There have been a number of recommendations made in this report that will help retain the existing landscape values or mitigate effects.
- An arborist report is provided to assess the condition and life expectancy of the trees along the North Brook so that a management plan can be provided to retain and or effect of the existing trees within the landscape.
 - Cultural liaison through MKL be continued with a view to creating a narrative for the proposal site that combines the protection and enhancement of natural and physical resources with mana whenua and historic heritage input, through the Spark family, to create a design narrative for the site focussing on its unique history and character.
 - Specific boundary solutions be created for the site to address the specific conditions related to the adjacent neighbour and the proposal ODP.
 - A streetscape concept be developed for the major roads (Boys Road and the REL) to confirm the surrounding landscape and infrastructure treatments and their landscape effects.
75. It is my opinion that the proposed rezoning can be supported from a landscape and visual perspective and that the above recommendations could be addressed at the subdivision consent stage of the process.

Matthew Neil Charles Lester

4 March 2024