

**Before the Hearings Panel
at Central Otago District Council**

under: the Resource Management Act 1991

in the matter of: Submissions and further submissions in relation to Plan
Change 19 of the Central Otago District Plan

and: **AF King & Sons Ltd**
Submitter 83

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ANNE ELEANOR WILKINS [LANDSCAPE]

Regarding **Lots 1-4 DP 444910** (5A Lowburn Valley Road) rezoning request

Dated 17 May

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My full name is Anne Eleanor Wilkins.
- 1.2 I am the Principal Landscape Architect and Urban Designer at Novo Group.
- 1.3 I hold a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture with Honours (BLA Hons) and I am a Registered Landscape Architect of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (the NZILA).
- 1.4 I have over 14 years' experience in landscape architecture and urban design. During this time, I have undertaken landscape and visual effects assessments across a broad range of project areas throughout New Zealand, including subdivisions, commercial developments, infrastructure, coastal works, marina developments, sport and park spaces, reserves, transmission lines, road projects and housing developments, for a wide range of clients including development groups and local authorities.
- 1.5 I have experience in providing landscape and visual effects assessments for developments of a similar nature, working on behalf of both applicants and councils. I am on various panels across New Zealand to peer review landscape development assessments. I have attended hearings, given evidence, and provided expertise, on a variety of landscape matters, including residential subdivisions similar to the proposal.

2 CODE OF CONDUCT

- 2.1 Although this is a Council hearing, I have read the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses 2023 and agree to comply with it. My qualifications as an expert are set out above. I confirm that the issues addressed in this brief of evidence are 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.

3 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 3.1 The purpose of my evidence is to review the potential landscape and visual effects of a proposed extension to the **Large Lot Residential Zone - Precinct 2 (LLRZ – P2)** over Lots 1 – 4 DP 444910, located at Lowburn, Cromwell, under the proposed wider **Plan Change 19 (PC19)**.
- 3.2 Specifically, my evidence is to evaluate whether an expansion is appropriate, by determining the sites landscape sensitivity and absorption capacity and whether development of the site would be in accordance with the **LLRZ – P2** provisions.
- 3.3 My evidence addresses the following:

- A summarised description of the proposal, with a focus on matters pertaining to landscape and visual impacts.
- Policy matters regarding relevant landscape and visual matters.
- Landscape character and visual amenity review.
- Summary.

3.4 **Assumptions and Methodology**

3.1 In preparation of this evidence, I have also reviewed the RMM Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment¹ document, which was prepared for Lowburn Viticulture Ltd, which provides a comprehensive review of the wider landscape value and characteristics of the area. This is given the specific reference in the s42 Report which states:

*"With respect to urban form, I consider that the Lowburn Viticulture Ltd property would provide a logical expansion to the current urban boundary and note that the impacts of this expansion have been assessed in detail and determined as being appropriate through the landscape assessment provided with the submission. Taking this assessment into account, I consider that the rezoning would be consistent with the current amenity and character of the township. While I consider that this may also apply to the A F King and Sons Ltd site, I note that no specific assessment has been included with the submission to confirm this."*²

3.2 Given the considerably tight timeframes assigned to me, I have relied upon desktop investigations, the above RMM Character Study, GIS Information and aerial imagery, and photographic evidence, for my initial review and in preparation of this Evidence. I will be visiting the site and surrounds on 22.05.2023, prior to the scheduled Hearing date, and will provide any written commentary resulting from this visit, if required, prior to the scheduled Hearing.

4 **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL AND CONTEXT**

4.1 The Submitter for the subject site (the Site) located at 5a Lowburn Valley Road seeks that the *Large Lot Residential – Precinct 2v (LLRZ-P2)* which has been notified as a part of **PC19**, which adjoins the northern boundary of their land, be extended over their property (Lots 1 – 4 DP 444910). It is my understanding, that the overall PC19 proposal has been driven by a desire from Council to implement the **Cromwell Spatial Plan (CSP)** which seeks to address the residential growth and accommodation for the next 30 years.

¹ RMM PC19 Residential Rezoning Lowburn Valley

² S42A Report paragraphs 222 - 223

- 4.2 The Site has a total land area of 8.029ha (80,290m²). The minimum allotment size for properties within the **LLRZ-P2** is 3,000m², therefore, theoretically the proposed rezoning will provide for up to a maximum of **26** properties with the Site. It is my understanding, that the Site is more likely to accommodate **18 - 19** properties when taking into consideration roading, services, and landform constraints (a potential 30% reduction for infrastructure) as subject to detailed design (etc).
- 4.3 Relevant to landscape and visual amenity matters, under the **LLRZ-P2** rules, each allotment could contain:
- One dwelling, one minor residential unit up to 70m² or 90m² including a garage, and accessory buildings;
 - Buildings that shall be no taller than 7.5m tall and in accordance with setback rules; and
 - Buildings not exceeding 15% of the overall net area of the site i.e. buildings that will not exceed 450m² in area³.

5 **POLICY FRAMEWORK REVIEW**

- 5.1 The key objectives of the **CSP** are:

Objective 2: manage urban form and settlement to achieve an effective and efficient pattern of development.

Objective 4: acknowledging community, authentic local character and identity.

Objective 7: rural productive environments, landscape, and amenity values.

- 5.2 The extension of the zoning (**PC19**) would achieve additional residential demand, while acknowledging and protecting the landscape as the area is already 'attached' to future development and would cohesively fit into this. The area would appear as an extension of the proposed development pattern without further disruption to the wider Cromwell landscape i.e. 'shifting' development to another, separated, site.
- 5.3 The submitters site is presently located within the Operative District Plans Rural Residential Resource Area and its northern boundary directly adjoins the Operative

³ Based on the minimum lot size of 3,000m², the combined floor area of a dwelling, minor residential unit and accessory building.

District Plans Residential Resource Area 5. I have reviewed the relevant provisions of the **Large Lot Residential Zone Chapter** in the District Plan, which are as follows⁴

5.4 **Objective LLRZ-01 Purpose of the Large Lot Residential Zone**

The Large Lot Residential Zone provides primarily for residential living opportunities.

5.5 The site would present additional space for residential living opportunities that would blend seamlessly into the future development to the north.

5.6 **Objective LLRZ-02 Character and amenity values of the Large Lot Residential Zone**

The Large Lot Residential Zone is a pleasant, low-density living environment, which:

- 1) contains predominantly low-rise and detached residential units on large lots,*
- 2) maintains a predominance of open space over built form;*
- 3) provides good quality on-site amenity and maintains the anticipated amenity values of adjacent sites; and*
- 4) is well-designed and well-connected into the surrounding area.*

5.1 The proposed zoning extension would meet the requirements for open space and coverage / density rules outlined for the **LLRZ-P2** zone e.g., 15% built form coverage etc. The amenity values of adjacent sites would remain the same and, given the location, would be immediately adjacent to other development meaning the area would be well-connected.

5.2 Objective **LLRZ-03 Precincts 1, 2, & 3**

The density of development in the Large Lot Residential Precincts recognises and provides for maintenance of the amenity and character resulting from existing or anticipated development in these areas.

5.3 The density of development would provide for the anticipated landscape character, resulting from the overall development of **PC19**. The addition of the 8 hectares (of additional **LLRZ-P2** zoning) would not compromise any overriding open space character of the whole wider area, given the site is pocketed by the road corridors and existing topography, and forms a natural 'edge' to this zone.

⁴ These are the provisions as detailed in the S42A Report, Appendix 1, PC19 Residential Chapter Provisions – Changed Recommended in the S42A Report.

5.4 **LLRZ-P1 Built Form**

Ensure that development within the Large Lot Residential Zone:

- 1) *provides reasonable levels of privacy, outlook and adequate access to sunlight;*
- 2) *provides safe and appropriate access and on-site parking;*
- 3) *maintains a high level of spaciousness around buildings and a modest scale and intensity of built form that does not unreasonably dominate adjoining sites;*
- 4) *is managed so that relocated buildings are reinstated to an appropriate state of repair within a reasonable timeframe;*
- 5) *provides generous usable outdoor living space for residents and for tree and garden planting;*
- 6) *maintains the safe and efficient operation of the road network;*
- 7) *mitigates visual effects through screening of storage areas and provision of landscaping; and*
- 8) *encourages water efficiency measures.*

5.5 The above design provisions would be applied at the submission site effectively to align with the entire wider **PC19** site development i.e. there are no known environmental factors that would deter from these provisions being met.

5.6 **LLRZ-P2 Residential Activities**

Provide for a range of residential unit types and sizes to meet the diverse and changing residential demands of communities.

5.7 The proposed extension would adhere to the overall provisions of the zone and the **CSP** to deliver residential development of differing typologies and sizes, to cater to future development.

5.8 **LLRZ-P7 Precincts 2 & 3**

Ensure that development within Precincts 2 & 3 maintains a higher level of open space consistent with the existing character of each precinct.

5.9 The extension of the zoning would maintain open space components guided by the rule requirements of the **LLRZ-P2** zone (15% coverage, smaller housing footprints etc).

6 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL AMENITY

- 6.1 Key considerations that frame the potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposal include:
- The Site contains consented residential building platforms i.e. the future visual aesthetics are anticipated development of built forms.
 - The landscape character is dynamic and shifting, and adaptation is anticipated due to **PC19**.
 - The Site is contained by the hillside topography and associated **SAL** to the west, the existing road, and residential use to the east and south, and the **PC19** site to the north, creating a pocketed, confined area that poses no risk to urban spread and is 'attached' to the anticipated future growth area.
- 6.2 The site does not form part of the distinctive hill formations or escarpments that are the distinguishing ONL features in the receiving landscape. The landform to the immediate west of the submitters land is zoned Rural Resource Area and is almost entirely affected by the Significant Amenity Landscape overlay (**SAL**). At its closest point, the **SAL** is located approximately 40m west and uphill of the south western corner of the submitters land; the extension of the zone would not affect this. It also means that there is no capacity for residential sprawl as the site is effectively contained from the western side (via the **SAL** and topography).
- 6.3 The Site is altered in nature, with a managed farming and horticultural arrangement that displays a high level of modification i.e. it is not highly natural. The Site is largely exotic grassland with highly cultivated, vineyard planting, minimising any potential for Biophysical effects on the landscape. In any case, any development that would occur at the site would be partial to earthworks and building controls under the zone rules.
- 6.4 The receiving environment will be able to adapt given the overall dynamic and shifting landscape character immediately adjacent; any change at the subject Site would be encapsulated by the overall development i.e., the actual character is shifting in nature. Therefore, the landscape sensitivity is low.
- 6.5 The area to the south and west, is largely the road corridors, being that of State Highway 6 and Lowburn Valley Road, alongside approximately 7 rural-residential living blocks averaging approximately 1 hectare in size. Any proposed residential activity will be contained within the boundary created by these road corridors and the area of existing residential development. In landscape terms, this is a positive as it significantly reduces the risk of cumulative effects or urban spread. In this regard, the Site forms a natural continuity (of the area to the north), is contained and provides an

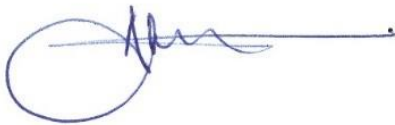
'edge' to the overall **PC19** area; therefore, the **LLRZ-P2** extension is well suited and appropriate at this location.

- 6.6 The site contains four approved and registered building platforms and therefore residential activity is already expected within this environment. Therefore, any potential for associative and perceptual effects are considerably reduced given this is the anticipated character of the site. Additionally, any visual impacts for immediate or direct viewing parties are lessened, given built forms are already anticipated at this location. Albeit at a higher density, the addition of (between) 18-26 dwellings will be party to design controls and open space coverage requirements under the **LLRZ-P2** zoning.
- 6.7 It is important to regard the potential visual impacts in the context of the anticipated zoning at the adjacent site. The anticipated visual change at this site, is to be that of a built-up modified environment containing residential dwellings. Additionally, visibility does not equate to a visual impact, as outlined in the *Te Tangi A Te Manu* NZILA Guidelines for visual assessment. Although the visual impact of the addition of built forms (dwellings) will be apparent, this is the anticipated future visual aesthetics surrounding the site, framing the overall adaptation to the surrounding receiving environment. The change to the anticipated environment immediately adjacent, is a key mitigating factor, for any immediate / direct and wider / indirect views.
- 6.8 The development will be at a similar elevation to the development in the area, which will assist in mitigating any further visual effects from wider areas, as any further development would be encapsulated in the larger 'picture'. Given the unique contained nature of the site, it will appear as a logical extension to the overall *Large Lot Residential* landscape. The adaptation of the site will not detract from open spaces as appearing from public surrounding areas; rather a natural continuation of the future development pattern which is to be adopted.
- 6.9 Overall, extending the proposed **LLRZ-P2** zoning to include the site would enable further residential growth without compromising the landscape character within the Lowburn Valley Settlement.

7 **SUMMARY**

- 7.1 Landscape character adaptation is anticipated as a part of the at the wider site under **PC19**. The proposal seeks an inclusion of 8.029 hectares in an otherwise much larger area. The landscape character, amenity, and values of the surrounding Lowburn Valley and its important topographical features will not be diminished because of the proposed re-zoning, given it is a minor extension of a wider dynamic and changing landscape character.

- 7.2 The Site contains consented residential building platforms i.e., the future visual aesthetics are anticipated to be a development of built forms and therefore a change to the visual character and aesthetics, lowering the landscape sensitivity.
- 7.3 The Site is contained by the hillside topography and associated **SAL**, and the existing road and residential activities to the west and south, creating a pocketed, confined area that poses no risk to urban spread. It will appear as a logical extension to the overall *Large Lot Residential* landscape to the north. The proposed expansion represents a logical infill, of a pocketed area contained by Lowburn Valley Road and SH6. This effectively amalgamates what would otherwise be an inconsistent area of rural residential zoning at the southern end of a built-up environment into the wider **PC19** site.
- 7.4 I consider that the rezoning of the Site to *Large Lot Residential – Precinct 2* will have acceptable effects on landscape and/or visual amenity, under the provisions of the District Plan. Therefore, the extension of the zoning is a suitable outcome for this Site and can be successfully integrated into the landscape fabric and the visual environment.



Anne Wilkins

Dated 16 May 2023