

Plan Change 19 Hearing

Main Submission Points - Harvey Perkins and Judith Miller (Perkins/Miller Family Trust, 35 Domain Road, Bannockburn), Niall and Julie Watson (122 Pearson Road, Cromwell) and Robyn Fluksova and Jindrich Fluksa (24 Domain Road, Bannockburn).

Summary

- There was no prior community consultation in Bannockburn about the rezoning of Domain Road Vineyard.
- Plan Change 19 as it affects Bannockburn is not based on the Cromwell Eye to the Future Master Plan.
- No evidence offered of other options for expansion of the residential zone yet six alternative options for expansion of the residential zone have been put forward in submissions.
- There are already large areas of undeveloped residential land in Bannockburn and we therefore question whether an expansion of the residential zone is required at all at this time.
- In our view, expansion to the south towards Schoolhouse Road is the least intrusive if expansion is required.
- Domain Road vineyard escapes scrutiny under the National Policy Statement – Highly Productive Land through a technicality, namely the timing of notification.
- It would seem only common sense to protect proven high quality vineyard land from housing development given the burgeoning reputation of the Bannockburn Wine Sub Region.
- The Domain Road Vineyard expansion erodes the values identified in the Cromwell Masterplan for Bannockburn namely the landscape, conservation, and heritage setting, and the rural and viticultural environment.
- Contrary to the view in the planning report the Domain Road Vineyard is not a rural outlier in an otherwise urban setting. Indeed Domain Road is a logical rural/urban boundary.
- The expansion also ignores the existing recreational and tourism values that Domain Road provides to pedestrians connecting through to Felton Road and the DOC historic reserve via Gibson Road and an unformed legal road.
- We agree with the Section 42A planning report that a separate spatial planning process is required before further residential rezoning is considered.

The main points of our submissions are:

1. The decision we seek from CODC is outlined in the Watson and Perkins/Miller original and further submissions except that the earlier suggestion (Perkins/Miller) that sites of 3000m² on the vineyard land would be acceptable mitigation for rezoning the land residential is withdrawn.
2. The notification of Plan Change 19 in respect of the Domain Road Vineyard and the expansion of the Bannockburn residential zone was obscure. There was no direct consultation with the residents of Bannockburn held in the township. Many local resident submitters had no idea about the Domain Road proposal until a few days before the final submission date. This caused a good deal of surprise and dismay. This is because they value the Vineyard very highly for its contribution to the rural character of the settlement and enjoy watching the day-to-day and seasonal operations. To lose the Vineyard to housing

would be a significant blow to their sense of place. This is much more than a discussion about views as suggested in the planning report.

3. The only explanation of how the Domain Road Vineyard area was chosen as suitable for residential zoning is in the s42A Report which says it was included (paragraph 80) because of:
 - discussions with the landholder;
 - being surrounded on three sides by residential areas and so 'squaring up' the residential zone boundary
 - being within an area of reticulated services.
4. These are poor criteria in our view and we strongly disagree that this expansion consolidates the township or has merit from an urban planning viewpoint. Photos 1 and 2 show the rural nature of the landscape from Domain Road. We do not know if alternative areas in Bannockburn were considered for inclusion in PC19. We are interested to know if other alternatives were considered, and if so how were they assessed and how the decision was reached to exclude them?
5. We were told informally, at the Cromwell Plan Change 19 discussion meeting, that one reason the Domain Road Vineyard housing rezoning proposal is favoured by the Council is that it is adjacent to existing service infrastructure. We note in response that as Bannockburn's residential area grows, more service infrastructure will have to be built. This is no less the case in Domain Road should the Vineyard be rezoned residential. An increase in house numbers of the number envisaged will demand improved roading and storm water reticulation, traffic management development at the intersections of Bannockburn Road with Domain and Hall Roads, the construction of footpaths, and water and sewer capacity of an appropriate scale. Seen in this way, building housing on the Domain Rd Vineyard site does not offer a significant advantage in infrastructure efficiency terms.
6. We also note that the s42A Report on water and wastewater does not endorse this view. It is clear from this report that further modelling of pressures on water and wastewater infrastructure from changes in zoning is planned but has yet to be undertaken (paragraphs 34-37 and 45)
7. There are already quite large areas of open land in Bannockburn, that for some time, have been zoned residential, but have not been made available for development. This raises the question of why it is considered necessary to zone more land for residential development at the present time? We also ask what the Council is doing to incentivise the development of land in Bannockburn already zoned residential?
8. The Cromwell 'Eye to the Future' Master Plan recognises Bannockburn as one of several separate 'settlements' which are described as a distinctive feature of Cromwell's spatial framework and much valued for their rural setting within the wider basin. The first two key principles of the Master Plan are particularly relevant to PC 19 as it affects Bannockburn:
 - Protect and celebrate the valued landscape, conservation and heritage setting.
 - Celebrate the horticultural, viticultural and agricultural environment.
9. The Master Plan emphasises the distinctive rural, heritage, recreational and tourism value of Bannockburn. Domain Road as presently configured, with its vineyard, public Domain, and

camping ground are a vital part of this character. The road and the vineyard, with its open green space character, links the settlement to the Department of Conservation's Sluicings Historic Reserve and Felton Road vineyards. Domain Road is regularly enjoyed by locals and visitors as a pedestrian accessway to Hodson, Hall, and Gibson Roads, and to the Sluicings Reserve and Felton Road. Although we note that the Unformed Legal Road connecting Gibson Road to Felton Road is not signposted so has considerably more potential as a walkway or cycleway connection (see Figure 1 and Photo 4).

10. The Cromwell Master Plan is described in the planning report (paragraph 12) as the blueprint for how residential growth should be accommodated and that PC19 is seeking to generally apply the rezoning identified in the spatial plan (paragraph 13). However in paragraph 78 and elsewhere the planning report confirms that the Cromwell Master Plan does not identify areas for growth in Bannockburn while it does so for Cromwell. Thus the Domain Road residential expansion has no foundation in the Master Plan. The rezoning of the Domain Road Vineyard will undermine the rural, landscape and recreational values that are central to the Master Plan and therefore conflicts in a most obvious way with that Plan. Much effort based on public consultation was put into the Master Plan. We are mystified as to how the Council can now support a residential rezoning proposal that undermines its earlier important work.
11. Further, the Section 42A Report suggests that greenspace planning is not a relevant consideration in Plan Change 19, but again, this is at odds with the focus and direction of those aspects of the Cromwell Master Plan concerning greenspace and pedestrian connectivity both generally, and in Bannockburn specifically. At the very least the existing character of Domain Road and its present value as a pedestrian and cycleway connection to Felton Road and the DOC reserve (without requiring any further planning approvals) should be given some weight.
12. If expansion of the residential zone is considered necessary, submissions on PC 19 indicate that there are six alternative sites within Bannockburn that do not encroach on established vineyard land or impact on rural character, but it is not clear if they have been evaluated by CODC planners. As these alternative options have been raised through submissions on PC 19, community consultation on their individual merits has been limited to PC 19 submitters. In our view, expansion to the south of the settlement, down to Schoolhouse Road, seems the least intrusive option if expansion is necessary.
13. We strongly support the s42A Report's recommendation (paragraph 88) that because of the large amount of community concern over the Domain Road residential zone expansion that the hearing panel give further consideration to Bannockburn's growth options through a separate spatial planning process.
14. We note that adoption of the National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land 2022 (NPS-HPL) is designed to protect the productivity of rural places. The Section 42A Report concludes that the NPS-HPL is not relevant to the Domain Road expansion even though the area is shown in the report as Class 3 soil. This is simply because it was notified in PC 19 (paragraph 88). However, the NPS-HPL is to be applied to some other areas put forward by submitters (paragraph 107) because they have not been notified in a plan. Thus Domain

Road vineyard escapes sensible scrutiny on a technicality, namely the timing of notification, when as we have said above, PC 19 does not follow on from the Master Plan.

15. It would seem only common sense to protect a proven high-quality vineyard area from housing development when other areas of less productive land are available. Even if the NPS-HPL does not apply, the protection of high-quality vineyard land and the rural character of Bannockburn are matters identified as being very important in the Cromwell Master Plan.
16. It is clear from the Domain Road Vineyard's own messaging that the vineyard sits on high-quality viticultural land. On one of its wine bottle labels (Domain Road Paradise Pinot Noir 2018 - back label – Photo 3) we read:

The unique terroir of our vineyards on Felton Road and Domain Road combined with a perfect grape growing climate and traditional viticulture techniques produce truly memorable wines. Our Paradise Pinot Noir, a single vineyard wine from Domain Road vineyard represents the best of the vineyard and the vintage.

It would seem a great shame to lose such a unique and iconic vineyard, and the highly productive land on which it sits, to housing, when other alternatives are available.

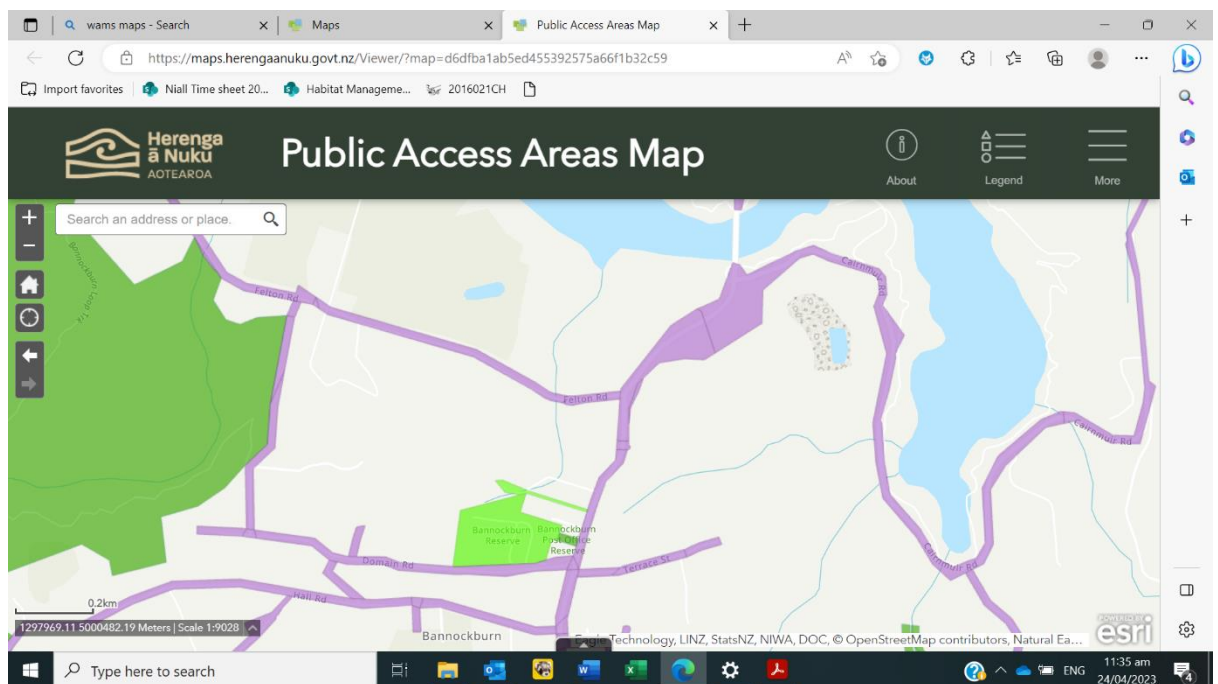


Figure 1. Screenshot of Walking Access Map for Bannockburn showing public roads (purple) and reserves (green) and connection to Felton Road



Photo 1. View across Bannockburn Domain to Domain Road Vineyard



Photo 2. View Across Domain Road Vineyard



Photo 3. Domain Road Vineyard wine label



Photo 4. View up Unformed Legal Road from Felton Road towards Gibson Road and Domain Road