

## RESPONSE COMMENTS BY LANDSCAPE PEER REVIEWER

CODC PC 14 – NZ CHERRY CORP – SHANNON FARM

PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE TO CREATE A RURAL LIVING RESOURCE AREA AT RIPPOVALE

**Ben Espie (Landscape Planner)**

**vivian+espie**

**28<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

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- 1 In relation to PC14, I was engaged by CODC to prepare a Peer Review Report in relation to the requestor's Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment Report (the R&M Report). My Peer Review Report is dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and was prepared during Alert Level 4 in relation to the Covid-19 virus and hence no visits to the site or surroundings were conducted as part of the preparation of that report.
- 2 My Peer Review Report found general agreement with the R&M Report but identified some areas in which more analysis and information was required. These areas related to both effects on landscape character and effects on views and visual amenity.
- 3 Since the time of my Peer Review Report I have visited the vicinity of the site and have viewed the site from many locations. I have also read the evidence and attended the hearing presentation of Mr Milne (the requestor's landscape witness) and a number of submitters.
- 4 The work that I have done since the time of my Peer Review has highlighted some issues as follows:
  - i. The R&M Report helpfully divides the site into a number of character areas. Additionally, part of the site is within an ONL and part of the site is within an SAL. Expectedly, the most sensitive part of the site (in relation to both landscape character and visual amenity) is the ONL part of the site. The next most sensitive part is the SAL part of the site.
  - ii. I agree that the proposed adjustment of the ONL and SAL boundaries are appropriate.
  - iii. Of the SAL part of the site, I consider that the East Gully is sensitive because:

- a) In relation to landscape character, it is open, simple and uniformly grass-covered such that its landform is legible and obviously unmodified. It is part of the hills that are the eastern toe of Mt Michael.
- b) In relation to views and visual amenity, it is relatively broadly displayed to the south (the Ripponvale Flats area incorporating Ord Road, the racecourse and parts of Ripponvale Road and SH6).
- iv. Objective 4.3.3 and Policy 4.4.2 that the proposed zoning will sit under are relevant in this regard since they seek to maintain/manage the “*open natural character of hills and ranges, skylines, prominent places and natural features*”.
- v. PC14 proposes RLA4 and RLA5 in the East Gully area of the SAL part of the site. The most prominent parts of the East Gully are proposed to be no-build areas but these are not excluded from subdivision (i.e. future rural living lots within RLA5 might each contain a considerable area of no-build land).
- vi. I consider that PC14 as proposed will affect the landscape character of the East Gully SAL area. Openness, naturalness, simplicity and legibility will be reduced. When we consider the Objective and Policy mentioned above, this effect must be considered to be adverse. Using the scale of Appendix 1 of the R&M Report, I consider that this effect is of a moderate degree.
- vii. I consider that PC14 as proposed will affect the views and visual amenity that are experienced from the Ripponvale Flats area (generally the area of Mr Milne’s Viewpoints 2, 3, 14 and 15 as well as many points between and nearby these Viewpoints). The gully which currently appears as visually legible, open and unoccupied/natural will become more visually complex, busy and obviously occupied. Again, with consideration of the Objective and Policy mentioned above, this effect must be considered to be adverse and again I consider it to be of a moderate degree. This effect will be experienced by observers from a number of viewpoints as described.
- viii. Regarding the effects identified in (vi) and (vii) above, I consider that the part of PC14 that relates to the East Gully SAL area does not sit entirely comfortably with Objective 4.3.3 and Policy 4.4.2. Tentatively, I suggest that in order to sit comfortably, PC14 does not need to

entirely exclude development from the SAL East Gully area; a reduced and reconfigured treatment of this area may be appropriate.

- 5 Notwithstanding the matters set out above that primarily relate to the SAL part of the site, I reiterate my high-level general agreement with the R&M Report; that PC14 has been formulated so as to respond to landscape issues well and to create a rural living area that (in general terms) is located and designed appropriately.

**Ben Espie**

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**28<sup>th</sup> May 2020**