

Matthew Jones for Waikato District Council: Summary Statement - Urban Design, Landscape and Visual Matters.

This statement provides a summary of the assessment and peer review undertaken in relation to the proposed District Plan Review to re-zone approximately 220ha of land at Ohinewai by Ambury Properties Ltd (APL).

The proposal presents a unique opportunity for urban development within this part of the Waikato, proximate to the existing Ohinewai development, State Highway 1 and the NIMT rail line. It provides a number of sound and appropriate design moves. These include the layout which emphasises and respects the sites underlying landscape values. It largely follows and reflects the sites topography, drainage patterns and attributes and the open space and landscape enhancement proposed will enhance and be contiguous with existing landscape patterns, particularly the wetlands to the east of the site associated with the ONF.

However, having undertaken the review and assessment in relation to urban design, landscape and visual matters, I cannot support the proposal based on the following matters of disagreement:

- The proposed design is separated from the **existing Ohinewai settlement** and will not read as single, coherent and integrated settlement pattern. Although connected (pedestrian, cycle and road infrastructure), it will provide a separate development;
- The **eastern-most intersection** on Tahuna Road should be reinstated to provide options, connectivity and choices for people, and avoid conflicts of modes and vehicles when connecting into and out of the residential zoned part of the site;
- Although the revised masterplan provides a **neighbourhood centre**, in my opinion, its location does not provide a strong urban design outcome in order to respond to "*community is at the heart of the proposal*". It should be more centrally located within the residential component. I agree with Mr Broekhuysen that both those living and working within the proposal should be accommodated, but a relocation will provide a stronger urban design outcome in relation to its purpose and the opportunity for a hub, facilities and amenities that serve the needs of the community, beyond those of solely economic benefit;
- In relation to **density**, in my opinion that which is anticipated is inappropriate in this setting. I acknowledge the intended central location of 'higher density' within the site adjacent to the amenity areas, such as areas of open space. However, although predominantly located centrally and having less visibility (from external locations), there will still be inherent effects on character. The perception of the area will be that of an industrial and suburban style development with associated buildings given the areas that will be visible. The traffic

movement and activity generated, intensity of use and potential effects of night lighting will also impinge on the character of the area – not purely the visibility of buildings;

- The nature of the structure plan and activities proposed is **not self-sufficient** and is ‘car centric’ requiring vehicle trips internally and externally, relying on the surrounding towns such as Huntly, Te Kauwhata and Ohinewai for amenities such as supermarkets and community facilities. Given the density anticipated, this further reinforces the necessity for a **central community hub** and centre, proximate and walkable to the majority of the residential community;
- Although I generally concur with the **landscape mitigation measures** proposed, in my opinion they should be amended to provide a wider buffer and planted margin (including coverage) along the boundary of the Business zone, and a landscape planted margin / buffer should be included along the Residential zoned boundary along Tahuna Road. The proposal is of a considerable scale and urban character in this rural setting. It is a definitive change from rural to urban. These measures will provide a level of visual softening, partial screening and will assist in integrating the edges of the proposal into the surrounding environment, reducing the effect of buildings on visual amenity values;
- The **pattern of development** anticipated through the proposal will have an urban form and grain aligning Lumsden and Tahuna Roads which is uncommon to the surrounding context. A new urban character will be created, set within the wider rural landscape. In my opinion, their scale and size will not be *“congruent with the surrounding residential housing grain”*¹;
- In relation to the **Ohinewai Lands Ltd** (OLL) land to the south, in my opinion the additional residential development in the area will rely on amenities within the APL site;
- In my opinion, the proposed **Zone Provisions** do not provide enough surety to the anticipated development pattern and housing typologies. In my opinion, the intention of the assessment criteria² is correct, however there are no quantitative measures to assess against, only broad statements that are subjective; and
- In relation to **Community Infrastructure**³, these elements must be built / implemented earlier. This proposal states that is a community driven project with *community at the heart*. In order to assist in creating that outcome these elements need to be implemented early in the project’s inception. They cannot be secondary matters.

¹ Refer Paragraph 9.8 of Mr Graham’s Statement of Evidence.

² For example, within Rule 16.6.3 RD8 - Assessment Criteria and Appendix 3.4 of the PDP.

³ For example, within Table 17.6.5.1 - matters (a) – (g).