

**BEFORE THE WAIKATO INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL**

**In the Matter** of the Resource Management Act 1991 (**Act**)

**And**

**In the Matter** Hearing 25: Zoning for Stage 1 (the 'Proposed Plan')

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**Statement of Evidence of Lisa Anne Jack on behalf of Thorntree Orchards, Cindy  
and Tony Young and Parkmere Farms**

**(Landscape Architecture)**

**Dated 17 February 2021**

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## Introduction

1. My full name is Lisa Anne Jack. I am employed by Harrison Grierson as the Team Leader of Landscape Architecture for the Company, based in the Parnell office. I hold a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (2006) from Unitec in Auckland, New Zealand. I am a Registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA).
2. I have 11 years of experience as a practicing Landscape Architect, 10 of those years in New Zealand. I have experience in landscape assessment, land development, land restoration and contract implementation for a range of project types and scales. My role with Harrison Grierson is primarily designing and managing landscape implementation of residential greenfield and brownfield subdivision projects, most notably in the Waikato District and the Auckland Region. In 2020 I was a member of the panel for the NZILA assessing members applying to become Registered.
3. I prepare this statement on behalf of the 'Submitters':
  - Thorntree Orchards (Submitter Reference 54, Further Submission Reference 1054)
  - Cindy and Tony Young (Submitter Reference 735, Further Submission Reference 1221)
  - Parkmere Farms (Submitter Reference 696, Further Submission Reference 1283)
4. The Submitters own property to the immediate east of Pokeno Village. Tony and Cindy Young own the property located at 80 Fraser Road while Parkmere Farms own the property located at 60 State Highway 2.
5. I visited the area proposed for rezoning on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020. I have visited the surrounds on numerous occasions for this and other 'like' development projects in the area.
6. I am highly familiar with Pokeno and its development over the last 7 years, as I have been engaged to design and implement the landscape for the existing approved areas around Helenslee and Hitchen Roads, as well as the newly

created industrial zone. As part of those works, I have undertaken regular visits to the area, mostly monthly, for the last 7 years.

7. I record that I have read and agree to abide by the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses as specified in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2014. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I rely upon the evidence of other expert witnesses as presented to this hearing. I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

### **Scope of Evidence**

8. My statement of evidence will address the reasons why I consider the area suitable for future urban living zoning. It provides:
  - a. A summary of the physical landscape components that make up the site and discussion of their suitability for urban development.
  - b. Discussion of boundaries suitable for future urban development in this area.
  - c. A summary of the visual sensitivity of the site.
  - d. A summary of the capacity of the site's surrounds to visually absorb urban development.
  - e. Discussion of the visual connection of the site to the existing developments within Pokeno, and if urban development would blend appropriately with these areas.
  - f. Conclusion
9. My evidence is supported by a number of appendices, which will be referred to in the relevant sections. **Appendix 1** is an overall context plan, which is not referred to specifically in this statement, but is supplied for context and information (and has been one of my considerations in reaching the conclusions and opinions set out in this evidence).
10. Viewpoints discussed throughout this evidence and illustrated in **Appendix 3** were accessed from publicly accessible areas only. I have taken them with the opinion that they are adequate representations of views available to private

landowners in the surrounding locations.

11. A summary of the relevant submissions lodged and a description of the area for which rezoning is sought (Pokeno East) is set out in the evidence of Mr Grala.<sup>1</sup> To avoid repetition, I adopt Mr Grala's evidence in that regard.
12. I note with reference to the evidence of Mr Grala that the Future Urban Zone (as the provisions are proposed) does not of itself enable urban development. Accordingly, I assess landscape matters in the context of a residential zone, which is the ultimate outcome sought for Pokeno East.

### **Landscape Components**

13. I have identified three areas which Pokeno East can be divided into: north-east, central and south-west. Analysis and supporting diagrams are included within **Appendix 2** of my statement which I will refer to as appropriate within the following sections.

#### North-East

14. The north-east topography is primarily flat and is, from a landscape perspective, amenable to a range of urban development opportunities and outcomes (including the potential for smaller residential lot sizes and medium density housing – refer to the evidence of Mr Vile).

#### Central

15. The central area has a distinct drainage pattern which runs in a roughly north-west to south-east direction. This drainage pattern is likely to require a 20m wide esplanade reserve / riparian margin from the edge of the stream bank on each side to meet the requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991, making this margin unsuitable for urban development. I consider restoration to native vegetation would be a suitable treatment and desirable from both an amenity and landscape perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> The evidence of Mr Vile also sets out a detailed analysis of the characteristics of Pokeno East.

16. I would expect future development adjacent to the drainage pattern to include public amenity through passive recreation and natural habitat enhancement that complimented the adjacent drainage pattern planting.
17. Steep sloped topography of grades ranging from 1:1 (vertical) to 1:5 extend beyond the 20m esplanade. I consider these slopes appropriate for limited larger lot urban development with the intention that the site contour remains intact (with exception of identified building platforms).

#### South-West

18. The south-west is characterised by varied topography which ranges from flat areas to gentle slopes, to moderate slopes. I consider this area suitable for residential development. However, I would anticipate that when the area gets developed, lot typologies and roading layouts should be sensitive to maintaining topography.

#### Vegetation

19. There are no notable native vegetation stands in Pokeno East other than native shrub buffers planted along boundaries by some residents to screen the state highways. Much of the site has established exotic vegetative shelterbelt systems which will ultimately be unsuitable within residential intensification. There are scattered individual specimen trees of note that could be retained during urban development subject to required civil works and finished ground levels. This includes the Oak trees on Avon Road and some mature Totara within several lots.

#### **Boundaries for a future urban zone**

20. I consider the development of different areas in any landscape should be primarily defined by topography and catchments, then cadastral boundaries and roads. If natural landform is respected and maintained, then water courses and steep topography inhibit denser development opportunities. In **Appendix 2** I have illustrated how I have used topography and catchments to inform internal boundaries to the type of development available within the

cadastral boundaries of Pokeno East.

21. Based on my opinion that topography and catchments should be primary drivers, I have also identified areas in **Appendix 2** outside of the subject area that I think would be appropriate extensions for urban development zoning.

#### **Visual sensitivity of Pokeno East**

22. The visual sensitivity of Pokeno East is limited, with views to it only possible from a relatively small number of isolated locations. These locations have either limited stationary viewers or they are transient viewers (i.e. motorists) moving at high speeds along the state highway. As a result of this assessment, I consider the site is appropriate for urban development from a visual sensitivity perspective.
23. The most visually sensitive part of Pokeno East is number 60 State Highway 2 and 100 Fraser Rd as seen from State Highway 2 travelling in both directions. This lot is surrounded by views of native shrub buffers planted on the edges of State Highway 2 and the boundaries of adjacent properties. I consider views to the lot are exposed in contrast to these vegetated areas. It is visually separated from the rest of the urban development of Pokeno to the west of State Highway 1 when viewed as a stationary viewer. However, I consider most viewers to be transient, and will see this location in conjunction with views of the western side of Pokeno either before or after they see this viewpoint. When seen as part of a journey, an appropriate urban development of this area would not seem out of place.

#### **Visual absorption capacity of the surrounding landscape to urban development**

24. In my opinion the capacity for the surrounding landscape to visually absorb development in Pokeno East is high. This is due to the nature of the surrounding topography, which obstructs views to Pokeno East with landform in the foreground, or through the majority of the site falling away behind what is seen.
25. Existing vegetation both within Pokeno East and on surrounding landscapes

also contributes. Most notably: Native vegetation buffers on boundaries to some lots adjacent to State Highways 1 and 2, native vegetation buffers on state highway land adjacent to Pokeno East, mature trees within Pokeno Domain, mature trees on Lower Church Road, mature trees on Saint Mary on the Hill, rural shelterbelt planting on various surrounding lots.

26. While some of the vegetation within Pokeno East will presumably be removed when development occurs (in particular the rural shelterbelt planting), mature trees in the domain will remain, vegetation buffers on private land adjacent to the State Highways are likely to remain and vegetation on State Highway land is likely to remain. In my view it is reasonable to expect that development of Pokeno East will include significant planting and restoration of the stream running through the central area identified in **Appendix 2**. Accordingly, in my opinion vegetation will continue to contribute in a positive way to the visual absorption capacity of the landscape. My analysis below includes some additional comments with respect to vegetation in the context of specific views.

Views from developed Pokeno.

27. The existing topography and planting that has been established along the edge of State Highway 1 means that views are limited from the existing residential area west of State Highway 1.
28. I would expect that most of the rural shelter belt planting within Pokeno East would be removed if it is developed for urban purposes. Assuming buildings are largely one storey (like those in the existing development to the west), removal of the shelter belt planting would allow views to some rooftops from the already developed western side of Pokeno. If buildings are constructed as two stories, then they would be clearly visible above the motorway buffer planting on the edge of State Highway 1.
29. I believe seeing this development would provide greater visual connection to the urban extension of Pokeno. However, I view the vegetated buffer that both NZTA and landowners have established against the state highway would be important to retain. This means that I support a balance between pursuing

opportunities to increase visual connection between Pokeno and the site while retaining buffer vegetation against the state highway.

30. Views from the 'Village' zone south of Avon Rd are also limited. The area adjacent to Avon Road would be most visible, however the nature of topography means the extent of development beyond this point would not be very apparent. From my perspective, this aspect of view combined with the backdrop of the vegetated Bombay Hills would absorb most of the visual impact of development in this area.
31. Removal of shelterbelt planting from within Pokeno East would give more extensive views of development from the 'Village' zone, and from the public reserve. I note that the impact of these changes in views from the 'Village' zone would be appropriate for an extension of urban development. However, I would expect that any development would create boundary treatments facing Avon Road that would enable them to visually blend with the character of the adjacent 'Village' zone rather than create a stark contrast.

#### Views from Rural zones.

32. Views of Pokeno East from the Bombay Hills are limited on public roads due to vegetative screening. Where the site can be seen views are fleeting, and I believe the amount of development visible in conjunction with surrounding farmland and the already developed Pokeno behind/adjacent would have minimal visual impact.
33. 'PANORAMA 5 - RVP5 - PINNACLE HILL ROAD' in **Appendix 3** illustrates views available between shelterbelts on the Bombay Hills looking towards Pokeno East. I consider this view is a fair representation of what a landowner in this location would see. It is my opinion that development of Pokeno East as seen from this view would also have minimal visual impact for stationary viewers.
34. Views from the 'Rural' zone east of Pokeno East are limited by topography and vegetation outside of the site, particularly within the Pokeno Domain. I consider any development visible would be at the crest of a hill. The extent behind it would not be clear due to the topography sloping away behind it. In



that context, in my opinion the visual effect would be appropriate for that of an urban development, signifying the start of the Pokeno township.

Views from State Highways.

35. Topography combined with the native shrub buffer planting on the sides of the state highways means that views to Pokeno East are limited to an area adjacent to State Highway 2's entry/exit only, which is currently identified as number 60 State Highway 2, and 100 Fraser Road (the north western corner). Provided urban development consists of dwellings that are primarily one storey high, views to Pokeno East from State Highway 2's entry/exit will remain limited essentially to this area. If dwellings are two stories high, some will be visible above native shrub buffer planting along both State Highways 1 and 2.
36. Urban development in the area identified as number 60 State Highway 2, and 100 Fraser Road would be a notable contrast with surrounding views of native shrub buffer planting in this location, and would constitute a clear change in land use and landscape character for this area. Therefore, I would support a lower density of development in this corner – with a lower density also being supportable due to other constraints (proximity to the stream and national grid corridor) I discuss below.
37. I believe that the implementation of native bush style vegetation 20m either side of the permanent water line, as required by the Resource Management Act 1991, would break views to development of the site from this location and soften the impact of this change.
38. In my assessment the restriction of development under the National Grid Line would also provide distance between dwellings as seen from this viewpoint, which would further soften views.
39. For these reasons, I am of the view that the visual absorption capacity for any urban development adjacent to the entry/exit of State Highway 2 is acceptable. Overall my opinion is that when viewed in transit, and subject to that area being sensitively developed, urbanisation of the area currently

known as 60 State Highway 2 and 100 Fraser Road would connect with views of the greater Pokeno residential zone and would be visually acceptable in that context.

### **Visual connection to Pokeno East**

#### View shafts to urban areas

40. Any extension of urban development requires a sense of connection with the existing urban fabric of Pokeno. I think the development of Pokeno East would have relatively limited connection with the existing urban development to the west of State Highway 1.
41. View shafts to the existing urban area on the western side of State Highway 1 are only visible from one location within Pokeno East. That is 'PANORAMA 9 - RVP9 - FRASER ROAD' as illustrated in **Appendix 3**. This view is important to retain to maintain a sense of community between the western and eastern sides of the highway.
42. From my perspective the limited visual connection to the existing urban fabric of west Pokeno increases the importance of maintaining view shafts to the 'Village' zone in the south.
43. I would expect that urban development along Avon Road would encourage the visual connection with the 'Village' zone through a designed character of the streetscape, lot boundaries and a considered variation in lot sizes and building typologies.

#### Visual character

44. I do not consider the visual character of existing urban development within the west of Pokeno an appropriate outcome for Pokeno East.
45. In my opinion, the land topography within Pokeno East indicates that a range of lot sizes and building typologies is an appropriate response. My view is that this approach allows retention of natural topography while maximising development opportunities on flat land. This would result in a varied built

form and site density, creating a dynamic urban texture that would enhance urban character.

46. I consider that if this outcome was pursued it would allow a greater visual connection with the existing 'Village' zone to the south, which has more opportunities in comparison with the existing western developments. I believe a varied urban grain would increase the capacity for development in Pokeno East to be visually absorbed by its surrounds (primarily the 'Village' zone). For that reason, I generally support the concept Masterplan prepared by Mr Vile, which identifies a nuanced urban form outcome that responds to landscape, landform and urban design constraints and opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

47. In my opinion from a landscape perspective, Pokeno East is suitable for urban development.
48. I consider the proposed location suitable for future urban living zoning due to landform, which provides large areas with gentle grades that are appropriate for various levels of urban development.
49. I see the natural water course running on a diagonal from north-west to south-east requires restoration to native vegetation and protection. This is an opportunity to create notable public amenity while enhancing the natural environment.
50. Pokeno East and its surrounding landform provide limited views into the proposed development area. Therefore, I believe it has a low visual impact as seen from the wider landscape.
51. The limited views available to the existing development of Pokeno to the west and south should be maintained and enhanced where possible in order to

create a sense of community and connection.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Jack', with a large, stylized loop at the bottom.

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**Lisa Jack**

Dated 17 February 2021