

**Before the Hearings Panel
At Porirua City Council**

Under Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of the Proposed Porirua District Plan

Between **Silverwood Corporation Limited**

Submitter

And **Porirua City Council**

Respondent

**Statement of evidence of Jane Black on behalf of Porirua City Council (Urban
Planning evidence)**

Date: 9 December 2021

INTRODUCTION:

- 1 My full name is Jane Black. I am self-employed as an Urban Planner.
- 2 I have prepared this statement of evidence on behalf of the Porirua City Council (**Council**) in respect of technical related matters arising from the submissions and further submissions on the Proposed Porirua District Plan (**PDP**).
- 3 Specifically, this statement of evidence relates to Submission 172 , which is a proposal for part of the Cannons Creek Ridge Special Amenity Landscape (SAL) in the PDP to be re-zoned from General Rural Zone (GRZ) to Future Urban Zone (FUZ). I am authorised to provide this evidence on behalf of the Council.
- 4 My evidence addresses whether the proposed re-zoning could accommodate comprehensive and integrated future development and provide for a well-functioning urban environment.
- 5 I am authorised to provide this evidence on behalf of the Council.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 6 I hold the qualification of Bachelor of Town Planning from the University of Auckland.
- 7 I am a Full Member of the New Zealand Planning Institute and a member of the Urban Design Forum.
- 8 I have over 30 years professional experience in urban planning and design. I am an independent planning Commissioner and have either chaired or been on hearings panels considering Proposed District Plans and Plan Changes related to urban zoning as well as resource consent applications for residential development. I undertake design review for

local authorities including Porirua City Council and Wellington City Council. I have provided advice to Wellington City Council on a review of design guidelines and I am on the Technical Review Panel for the Council's draft District Plan.

Code of conduct

- 9 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses set out in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2014. I have complied with the Code of Conduct in preparing my evidence and will continue to comply with it while giving oral evidence before the Environment Court. My qualifications as an expert are set out above. Except where I state I rely on the evidence of another person, I confirm that the issues addressed in this statement of evidence are within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from my expressed opinions.

SUMMARY

- 10 I have been asked by the Council to provide urban design evidence in relation to Submission 172, which is seeking to have land re-zoned from General Rural (GRZ) to Future Urban Zone (FUZ). Part of the land has a Special Amenity Landscape (SAL) overlay in the PDP.
- 11 The Submission includes a Draft Structure Plan for the area, although its inclusion in the PDP is not sought at this stage.
- 12 My statement of evidence addresses whether the urban design assessment demonstrates that any development of the site would generally be able to achieve Policy 1 of the NPSUD in terms of a well-functioning urban environment. In addition, whether the urban design assessment appended to the application demonstrates that this is achievable.

- 13 In summary, my evidence is that the site is able to provide for residential development that would provide for a well-functioning urban environment. This is because:
- 13.1 The site is located in close proximity (0.6km) to Waitangirua local centre, and 3km from Whitby local centre via the future Whitby Link Road.
 - 13.2 The site is adjacent to established residential areas in Waitangirua and Silverwood/Whitby. It is in close proximity to the local Marae.
 - 13.3 Access to the adjacent Belmont Regional Park can be achieved, providing good recreational opportunities and connectivity to the natural environment.
 - 13.4 Access to the site is possible from the Waitangirua Link Road to Transmission Gully. Access is also available from an existing access on Arahura Crescent in Waitangirua. Good connectivity within the site is possible for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians while accommodating it within the topography of the land. The site is on a planned public transport route.
 - 13.5 The orientation of the site provides good opportunities for access to sun and views.
 - 13.6 The value of the SAL can be maintained as a backdrop to eastern Porirua where development is restricted to the lower slopes.
 - 13.7 Existing vegetation can be retained while providing for residential development.

13.8 A range of housing typologies is possible to create variety and choice.

13.9 A neighbourhood centre can be located within the site to provide convenience shopping for new residential development.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

14 My statement of evidence addresses the following matters:

14.1 Whether the applicant's urban design assessment demonstrates that any development of the site would be able to generally achieve Policy 1 of the NPSUD in terms of a well-functioning urban environment.

15 Transport and Landscape effects are being considered by other experts.

EVIDENCE

16 In my opinion, the urban design assessment ("the assessment") which forms part of the application, demonstrates that there is scope for residential development within this site that would provide a well-connected community with a range of housing options.

17 The site is located in close proximity to existing residential areas, Waitangirua and Whitby. Residential sites at Waitangirua are immediately adjacent to the Landcorp block and the site slopes up from these sites. Currently it provides a hilly green backdrop to the area. To the north, residential development in Whitby has spread south towards this site.

18 The closest centre is Waitangirua although this is limited in terms of what it offers for daily requirements. The nearest supermarkets are either at

Aotea which is approximately 3km away or Whitby being approximately 5km away. A commercial centre is proposed as part of this development.

19 Managing the interface between adjacent areas will be important and the assessment makes recommendations on the matters that would need to be addressed. These will ensure that development of the area is integrated with the existing context. In particular:

19.1 Ensuring good access to these areas and centres while providing some social, cultural and recreational opportunities within the site.

19.2 Providing a variety of housing typologies to enable choice and a diverse community.

19.3 Maintaining a visual and cultural connection with Maraeroa maraeⁱ.

20 Access to the site can be provided from the Waitangirua Link Road and via an existing access on Arahura Crescent. The assessment acknowledges that the topography and protection of the SAL provides some challenges. The assessment recommends that at least two intersections be made with the Waitangirua Link Road to provide vehicle access to the site acknowledging that the level change between the link road and the site will need careful management.

21 Provision can be made for good cycling and walking tracks both to and within the site. Connections to Belmont Regional Park can also be achieved. A planned public transport route will connect this site with the wider network. These will enable good recreational opportunities as well as multi modal options to surrounding areas.

22 The landform of the site is described as “*steep and undulating*”ⁱⁱ. It provides a scenic backdrop to eastern Porirua. This elevation above the

surrounding area will enable good access to sun and views from the site. Protection of the SAL values of the site and its role as a green backdrop to the east will need to be carefully considered in site planning. The assessment recommends actions that should be taken to mitigate any effects. These include:

- 22.1 Minimise modification of the landform by locating development on flatter areas and clustering development.
- 22.2 Use of individual building platforms rather than large scale terracing to more successfully nestle building sites within the existing landform.
- 22.3 Retention of the higher ridgeline as green open space with buildings located below the ridgeline.
- 22.4 Use of design guidelines to control built form, materials and colour to minimise impact and guide appropriate housing typologies to fit in with the landform.
- 22.5 Concentration of development on lower slopes.
- 22.6 Implementation of a vegetation plan to mitigate visual impact.ⁱⁱⁱ

- 23 The proposed structure plan, at least at a high level, indicates consistency with the recommendations of the assessment with development clustered on the lower slopes of the Landcorp site. Restricting development to the lower slopes and managing sensitive earthworks will be key to ensuring successful integration of the development into the landform.

- 24 The Silverwood Lot S6 is described as being less sensitive to change and the proposed structure plan proposes pockets of housing on the upper slopes.^{iv}
- 25 A number of initiatives should be undertaken to restore the natural environment and mitigate visual effects. These are identified in the assessment and include:
- 25.1 Water sensitive design and riparian restoration of Duck Creek.
- 25.2 Retention of existing vegetation and revegetation throughout the development and in drainage gullies.^v
- 26 Deliberate and careful on-going management of the natural environment will be necessary to retain the landscape values of the site.

CONCLUSION

- 27 The urban design assessment demonstrates that residential development on this site can provide a well-functioning urban environment. The site is well connected to adjacent residential areas and in close proximity to centres. Good access can be provided to the site and promote multi modal transport choices. The Landcorp site provides an important green back drop to eastern Porirua. This can be maintained by restricting development to the lower slopes and sensitive management of earthworks, careful site planning and building design.
- 28 The proposed structure plan demonstrates consistency with the recommendations of the urban design assessment and this approach would need to be maintained if the land is re-zoned.

Date: 09/12/2021

Jane Black.

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- ⁱ Urban Design Assessment P35
 - ⁱⁱ Urban Design Assessment P20
 - ⁱⁱⁱ Urban Design Assessment P37
 - ^{iv} Landscape Assessment P24
 - ^v Urban Design Assessment P38