

**Memorandum**

**To:** Chloe Trenouth – Hill Young Cooper Ltd.                      **Date:** Monday, August 31, 2020  
Emily Buckingham – Hill Young Cooper Ltd.

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**From:** Matthew Jones, Isthmus Group Ltd.

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**Subject: Waikato District Council – Ohinewai Rezoning.**  
**Landscape, Visual and Urban Design Assessment Peer Review – Review and response to the expert evidence of Ambury Properties Ltd (APL).**

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Ambury Properties Ltd (APL) and Ohinewai Lands Ltd (OLL) have submitted on the District Plan Review to re-zone approximately 220ha of land at Ohinewai within the Waikato District from Rural to a mix of Industrial, Business and Residential Zones.
- 1.2 Following my initial review of the application documents in relation to urban design, landscape and visual assessment matters I prepared a memorandum to outline my findings from the review and any specific matters required to be addressed.
- 1.3 Subsequently, a witness conferencing session with APL experts was held on 23 June 2020 (which included the Council Commissioners) from which a Joint Witness Statement (“JWS”) was prepared outlining the outstanding matters of agreement and disagreement in relation to the proposal.
- 1.4 The matters outlined in that JWS were:
  - a) TAHUNA ROAD VEHICLE CONNECTIVITY - The number of vehicle connections / intersections onto Tahuna Road is appropriate;
  - b) URBANISATION OF OHINEWAI - The further urbanisation of Ohinewai is justified based on the existing patterns of development along SH1;
  - c) INTEGRATION WITH EXISTING OHINEWAI - The proposal integrates with the existing Ohinewai settlement in relation to development patterns and connectivity;
  - d) NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE LOCATION - The revised location of the neighbourhood centre is appropriate;
  - e) RESIDENTIAL DENSITY- The density shown in the illustrative masterplan is appropriate;
  - f) SHARED PATH CONNECTION TO OHINEWAI - The alignment and mechanism of delivering the shared path connection to the existing Ohinewai settlement is appropriate;
  - g) DESIGN GUIDELINES - A site-specific Design Guideline is not required as part of the plan change; and
  - h) OLL LAND - The proposal suitably allows for any future development of the OLL land if it eventuates.

- 1.5 Following this witness conferencing session, Mr Jonathan Broekhuysen (urban design) and Mr Michael Graham (landscape and visual) have prepared statements of evidence in support of the proposal and seeking to address these matters.
- 1.6 This memorandum provides a technical review of those respective statements and a response in relation to whether the matters of disagreement have been addressed. This relates to matters raised within my original review and the JWS.

## **2 REVIEW OF APL EVIDENCE IN RELATION TO URBAN DESIGN, LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT MATTERS**

### **Statement of Evidence of Mr Jonathan Broekhuysen (Urban Design).**

- 2.1 Mr Broekhuysen has provided an extensive statement of evidence.
- 2.2 In relation to those matters outlined above, the following provides matters are that still in disagreement:
  - i. The number of vehicle connections / intersections into the site on Tahuna Road;
  - ii. The justification of the urbanisation of Ohinewai based on existing patterns of development along SH1;
  - iii. The project integrating with the existing settlement of Ohinewai in relation to development patterns and connectivity;
  - iv. The location of the neighbourhood centre, its purpose and its appropriateness. In my opinion it is more important to seek to create a stronger heart to the residential community rather than the commercial;
  - v. The density illustrated on the Masterplan (its appropriateness) and the subsequent allowances within the proposed provisions;
  - vi. The proposal suitably allowing for any future development on the Ohinewai Lands Limited site to the south across Tahuna Road; and
  - vii. It was also only partially agreed that specific Design Guidance may not be necessary for the proposal.
- 2.3 Within paragraphs 9.4 – 9.6 of Mr Broekhuysen’s evidence he provides reasons for the change to the most recent Masterplan relating to the removal of the eastern most intersection and access into the residential part of the site from Tahuna Road. In my opinion, its removal will, in effect, create a large cul-de-sac (within the site) which reduces options, connectivity and choices for people which is not solely reliant on travel times. It will put pressure on the single remaining intersection into the residential area.
- 2.4 Although there are other roads within the structure plan and masterplan which access Tahuna and Lumsden Roads, it is my opinion that the majority of people travelling by car from the residential area will access Tahuna Road from this remaining intersection. As opposed to travelling through the industrial and business zones, where there may be a conflict of modes and vehicles.

- 2.5 Mr Broekhuysen and I only partially agreed that “*Ohinewai can urbanise because it is an existing village*”<sup>1</sup>. My concern is related to how the urbanisation occurs given the proposal is divided from the existing Ohinewai settlement by SH1 and the NIMT. Although I acknowledge it is proximate<sup>2</sup>, the proposed development is still separated from Ohinewai and, in my opinion, will not read as a single, coherent and integrated settlement pattern. It is severed by the SH1 and NIMT and separated by approximately 500m. As such, in my opinion the proposal will not complement the existing settlement.
- 2.6 I remain of the opinion, as outlined within my original peer review memorandum and the JWS, that the neighbourhood centre should be located within the residential component of the proposal. This will provide a stronger urban design outcome in relation to its purpose to create a heart and the opportunity for a hub, facilities and amenities that serve the community, beyond those of pure economic benefit.
- 2.7 As the proposal currently stands the community centre is located within the business area and is a considerable distance from the northern and eastern reaches of the areas zoned residential. Although, I agree with Mr Broekhuysen that both those living and working within the proposal should be accommodated and have easy access to the neighbourhood centre, in my opinion, it should be located further east to provide diversity of activity within the residential zone adjacent to, and connected with, the high amenity Central Park open space.
- 2.8 Although a useful mapping exercise, the data within Attachment E (of Mr Broekhuysen’s evidence) can be read favourably both ways. The area calculations and percentages provide useful references, but information such as population (e.g. number of residents, and workers etc) should also be taken into account. For the reasons outlined above, the neighbourhood centre should be situated further east.
- 2.9 In relation to density, I remain of the opinion that the density anticipated is inappropriate in this rural setting. I acknowledge its intended location centrally within the site adjacent to the amenity areas, such as areas of open space. However, although predominantly located centrally within the site and having less visibility (from external locations), there will still be inherent effects on character. The proposal is also not self-sufficient and will rely vehicle trips internally, and also externally to the surrounding townships such as Huntly.
- 2.10 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer para 3.1 of the *Joint Witness Statement of Experts in relation to Landscape and Urban Design Matters*, dated 23 June 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is proposed across the SH1 and NIMT as part of the proposal which will provide a connection to the existing Ohinewai settlement.

- 2.11 I also feel that the comparison of net and gross density (as outlined within paragraph 9.12(a) of Mr Broekhuysen's evidence) is not useful in this instance. At the net density being proposed, it is the design and character of the proposal that is to be addressed rather than a comparative assessment where the large areas of open space are taken into account. The gross density numbers outlined do not reflect the type of development proposed.
- 2.12 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.

**Statement of Evidence of Mr Michael Graham (Landscape and Visual).**

- 2.13 Mr Graham also provides an extensive statement of evidence.
- 2.14 A number of the matters of disagreement relating to landscape and visual matters are the same as those outlined above within paragraph 2.2 and were responded to in the subsequent paragraphs. Mr Graham does not provide a specific section responding to the matters outlined within the JWS (like Mr Broekhuysen does).
- 2.15 Other specific matters raised in Mr Graham's evidence are discussed below.
- 2.16 Within paragraphs 2.6, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.9(a) and 4.9(b) Mr Graham outlines the landscape mitigation measures proposed. This largely relates to the respective setbacks and landscape treatment proposed along the respective site boundaries. I generally concur with the measures enabled, however in my opinion:
- a) The 3m width of landscape planting along the Business zoned boundary should be a minimum 5m wide and include species that are capable of substantially screening development, and
  - b) The 15m wide setback area along Tahuna Road adjacent to the residential zoned land should include a minimum of a 5m landscape planting buffer
- These measure will provide mitigation screening to the proposed development, reducing the effect of buildings on the existing visual amenity values of the surrounding area.
- 2.17 Within paragraph 7.9 Mr Graham states that the proposed development will be seen as an extension of the existing development around Ohinewai. For the reasons outlined above within paragraph 2.5, I disagree.
- 2.18 Within paragraph 9.8 Mr Graham states that the residential buildings that will be visible along Lumsden and Tahuna Roads will be of a scale and size *"which are congruent with the surrounding residential housing grain"*. I respectfully disagree. The pattern of development anticipated through the proposal will have an urban form and grain aligning these roads (particularly Tahuna Road) which is uncommon to the surrounding context. A new urban character will be created, set within the wider rural landscape.

### 3 REVIEW OF PROPOSED ZONE PROVISIONS.

3.1 Specific design guides have not been pursued by APL, but site specific provisions relating to the respective zones have been prepared. Having reviewed the Proposed Zone Provisions I provide the following comments:

#### **Business Zone.**

- i. Rule 17.6.3 RD3 – the minimum width of landscape planting should be 5m and include species that are capable of substantially screening development,
- ii. Rule 17.6.5 Councils Discretion shall be restricted to the following. In my opinion, this should read *i) effects on **landscape, visual and amenity values**,*
- iii. In Table 17.6.5.1. Under **Community Infrastructure**. Matters (a) – (g) 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.

#### **Industrial Zone.**

- i. Rule 20.6.2 RD4. The planting provision for the 15m width along on Lumsden Road and 8m on Balemi Road will provide screening elements. However, the wording needs to be amended so that there is surety of **planting coverage** as well as planting height. The way the rule is it is currently written could allow for a series of taller trees (to 5m in 5years) only in these areas with no necessity for planting coverage,
- ii. Rule 20.6.4 RD6 (a). In my opinion this rule should read as “...for all areas of **public and private** open space...”,
- iii. Rule 20.6.4 RD6 *overall*. Detail needs to be added regarding species, spacings, heights etc,
- iv. In relation to **Community Infrastructure**, I provide the same comment as above, but this time in relation to Table 20.6.4.1. Matters (a) – (g) need to be built / implemented earlier.

#### **Residential Zone.**

- i. Rule 16.6.3 RD8 in relation to Assessment Criteria. The intention is correct, however there are no quantitative measures to assess against, only broad statements that are subjective. Appendix 3.4 of the PDP provides an additional level of detail for assessment when designing the superlots and houses, but again no specific quantitative measures to provide surety to the development anticipated,
  - ii. Rule 16.6.5 RD6 reads like a superlot application. Not for each individual lot as it is designed and consent application,
  - iii. Table 16.6.5.1. **Community Infrastructure**. Again, as previously outlined in relation to matters (a) – (g) needing to be built / implemented earlier.
- 3.2 The provisions also need to include a minimum of a 5m landscape planting buffer along the Tahuna Road edge to provide mitigation screening to the proposed Business and

Residential zoned land. This would be located within the 15m setback area. This is outlined within para 2.15 of my original memorandum review document.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The proposal provides a number of sound and appropriate design moves and these have been outlined within my previous memorandums and statements. However, having undertaken further review and assessment in relation to urban design, landscape and visual matters, I remain of the opinion that I cannot support the proposal for the following reasons:
- a) The proposal will not integrate with the existing Ohinewai settlement to the west. Although connected (pedestrian, cycle and road infrastructure), it will provide a separate development;
  - b) 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”*. There is an opportunity for a hub, facilities and amenities that serve the needs of the community, beyond those of solely economic benefit;
  - c) The nature of the structure plan and activities proposed is ‘car centric’ and will require vehicle trips internally and externally, relying on the surrounding towns such as Huntly, Te Kauwhata and Ohinewai) for amenities supermarkets and community facilities;
  - d) The density of the residential component of the proposal is inappropriate in this setting.

Matthew Jones.  
Isthmus.