

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource
Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF a private plan change
request ('Proposed
(Private) Plan Change
40: Wallaceville') to the
Upper Hutt City District
Plan made by
Wallaceville
Developments Limited.

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF LAUREN WHITE
[SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT]

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Minute #3 from the Hearing Committee requested that I provide additional evidence to satisfy the following matters.

- i) *From an urban design perspective whether it is appropriate that the Grant Bush Precinct classification (which allows for more intensive residential development) be extended to the triangular area south of Alexander Road as opposed to the Wallaceville Living classification which provides for more standard residential development;*
- ii) *What effects, if any, would there be from an urban design perspective, if the future allotments directly adjoining Alexander Road did not have direct access to the road, and (rather) gained access by an internal circulation network provided by future subdivision; and*
- iii) *Related to this, whether any changes would be required to the structure plan or other methods if future allotments are precluding from direct access onto Alexander Road.*

Each are addressed in turn below.

2.0 LAND SOUTH OF ALEXANDER ROAD - APPROPRIATE ZONING

2.1 The Structure Plan indicates a small enclave of residential development (proposed as Residential (Centres Overlay)) nestled amongst vegetation on land currently identified as Rural Lifestyle Zone in the Upper Hutt District Plan. The remaining land currently zoned Rural Lifestyle is proposed to retain its zoning.

2.2 The decision to propose residential activity on this portion of the plan change area was carefully considered during the structure planning process. Once it was established that there are no technical or engineering constraints which prevent this area of land from being developed for residential purposes of any density, the decision was informed and supported by three key documents as follows:

- The Landscape and Visual Assessment which concludes that the development of this area would not reduce the value of the hills south of Alexander Road as a elevated vegetated backdrop which provides the area with visual connection to the surrounding landscape;
- The Integrated Transport Assessment which concludes that residential development south of Alexander Road assists with a change in the nature of Alexander Road and its integration with the Plan Change area, functioning as a District Arterial but still performing as a street with both “movement and place” function.
- The Upper Hutt City Growth Strategy (2007) which promotes sustainable development which makes efficient use of resources, including public transport infrastructure.

2.3 The decision not to propose a more standard conventional or suburban residential development (i.e. just Residential Zone with no overlay) in this area was also carefully contemplated. This decision was informed by the following three factors:

- The urban design outcomes on Alexander Road (scale and form);
- The potential nature of vehicle, cycle and pedestrian movement on Alexander Road; and,
- The principle of maximising land use within close proximity of public transport infrastructure.

Urban Design Outcomes

- 2.4 From an urban design perspective, it is desirable that streets have a consistent built form on both sides. This provides a clear message to all street users as to the type and function of the street and the appropriate behaviour. It is also more likely to result in more cohesive environment, with similar building frontage widths and heights and generally a more attractive and “comfortable” streetscape.
- 2.5 As such, the appropriate intensity and character of residential development proposed for the triangular enclave south of Alexander Road by the Structure Plan is consistent with that on the northern side of Alexander Road, namely it is identified as part of the Grants Bush Precinct and proposed to be zoned as Residential (Centres Overlay).
- 2.6 Allowing for more intensive residential development (which is likely to result in smaller site sizes and double storey housing) will assist with creating a better scale and sense of enclosure to Alexander Road. With a reserve width of 23m, combined with front yard building setbacks, this road is relatively wide for a residential street, and will benefit from more intensive built form along its edges.
- 2.7 The location of this enclave nestled within a significant green environment means that the density and scale of future residential development can be off set and balanced by the open space. With a limited extent and surrounded on two of its three sides with densely wooded areas, future residential dwellings can enjoy an open space outlook to balance potentially smaller site sizes and visually more intensive streetscapes.

Alexander Road Outcomes

- 2.8 The approach of balancing movement function with placemaking has led to the proposal for the speed limit along this portion of Alexander Road to be reduced to 60km/hr and that

formal traffic calming measures be adopted to indicate to drivers the change in the speed environment and requirement for appropriate behaviour.

- 2.9 My colleague Mr. Mark Georgeson, author of the Integrated Traffic Assessment, has argued in his evidence that residential development south of Alexander Road assists with this change in nature of Alexander Road and its integration with the Plan Change area. New road intersections and individual property access will help to slow traffic and create a street environment that still fulfils its District Arterial responsibility but still performs as a street with both “movement and place” function.
- 2.10 I would argue that allowing for more intensive residential development south of Alexander Road will further serve to achieve the visual integration of Alexander Road with its adjacent residential environment. More intensive residential development will likely result in more driveway crossings and increased pedestrian traffic, which in turn would support the separate process for the reduction of the speed limit to 60km/hr.
- 2.11 Furthermore, more intensive residential development will also likely provide for increased surveillance of the street, including the shared pedestrian and cycleway which contributes to street safety (CPTED).

Maximising the Land Resource

- 2.12 The principle of sustainability promotes the integration of higher density land use and public transport infrastructure. The Structure Plan document includes a drawing which illustrates potential walking distances and times associated with the Wallaceville train station. This shows that the land south of Alexander Road is generally within an easy 10 to 15min walking distance of the station (assuming a pedestrian crossing is provided). As such, it is appropriate that provision be made to maximise the potential number of dwellings/residents which can access this public transport and reduce necessary private vehicle use (fuel and emissions etc.).
- 2.13 In summary, the high density residential development of the triangular portion of land to the south of Alexander Road is appropriate as:
- it does not detract from or devalue the site’s or wider area’s landscape context;
 - it makes good use of land which is within walking distance of public transport and future community services; and
 - it assists the transition of Alexander Road to a slower speed environment which is more compatible with its adjacent residential land use.
- 2.14 On the basis of the above, I recommend that no modifications to the proposed zoning of the land to the south of Alexander Road and the relevant Gateway Precinct intentions and outcomes are necessary or appropriate.

3.0 ACCESS TO THE LAND SOUTH OF ALEXANDER ROAD AND DIRECT ACCESS OF RESIDENTIAL ALLOTMENTS FROM ALEXANDER ROAD

- 3.1 The function of Alexander Road as a District Arterial was recognised during the structure planning process for the site. As further discussed in the evidence of Mr Mark Georgeson, from a traffic function point of view, it is accepted that Alexander Road carry significant volumes of traffic to and from the central city, some of it industrial in nature.
- 3.2 The nature of Alexander Road will however be different in Area A and Area B. In Area A, where higher intensity residential may eventuate and residential activity is anticipated on both sides of the road for some of its length, Alexander Road will have a more enclosed residential character. Area A connects new development to the existing residential environment along Ward Street. In Area B, where land south of Alexander Road is anticipated to develop as industrial land, the character will be of mixed land use/activity and a more open character.
- 3.3 From an urban design point of view, I consider it important that future residential development in Area A provide a good interface to the road, with active frontages, habitable room windows and lot layouts that create a sense of address. Residential amenity, pedestrian and cycle safety and visual appeal need to be balanced with traffic speed and volume. This will provide activity and surveillance of Alexander Road which is proposed to have a shared path for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.4 With respect to traffic safety and individual property access to Alexander Road, I believe that there are design solutions to minimise potential conflicts if necessary, such as posting a lower speed limit, providing rear access to properties which front the road or providing for vehicle turning on-site in order to prevent cars “backing out” into traffic lanes. Requirements for on-site manoeuvring are already contained in the District Plan (standard 18.9 for the Residential Zone) and all new accessways are required to have practical vehicle access in accordance with the Code of Practice for Civil Engineering Works.
- 3.5 A comparative example in Upper Hutt where individual driveway accesses onto a 70km/hr speed limit is Main Road North – SH2 north of its intersection with Fergusson Drive. Here the existing suburban development fronts a road with the high movement function of a national arterial i.e. individual houses face and access the road.
- 3.6 Should individual vehicle access to properties along Alexander Road in Area A be prevented, and no specific design controls are implemented to control the outcome, I believe it is likely that a poor urban design outcome will eventuate. As future dwellings will naturally face away from Alexander Road and address an alternative local road from which they gain access, the Alexander Road boundary will be characterised by rear fences. This will limit the extent to which Alexander Road is integrated with its surrounding land use and will also isolate residential development on the southern side.
- 3.7 Furthermore, this orientation provides a real challenge for future dwellings which are then faced with either private open space on the southern (shady) side (which does not meet District Plan requirements) or private outdoor space on the northern side but located to the front of the property. Private outdoor space can also be provided to the side of the dwelling, but this usually requires a larger site width (and therefore size) to achieve. Where the second option is delivered, it is also more likely that high fencing to the local road will be provided in order to ensure privacy to those outdoor areas. As such, the result is not only a poor outcome on Alexander Road, but also potentially a poor outcome on the parallel local road. Allowing dwellings to front Alexander Road, provides the opportunity for them to locate private outdoor areas to the north facing rear of the property, as well as living rooms which can maximise the solar gain from that direction, while still having front doors, post boxes and frontage to Alexander Road.

- 3.8 If individual vehicle access from properties in Area A onto Alexander Road were prevented by the Structure Plan, it is important to include specific controls to fencing along Alexander Road in order to ensure a high quality streetscape. While this is relatively easy to achieve, it does add another layer of complexity to the plan and an additional design challenges for housing development. If not carefully considered and innovatively addressed, the result on this stretch of Alexander Road could be dwellings with “fake” front doors, gardens with little or no privacy, loss of activity and surveillance on Alexander Road due to rear elevations (kitchen and bathroom windows) or dwellings with habitable rooms that have poor solar gain.
- 3.9 In Area B, where industrial development is anticipated south of Alexander Road, a different urban design response is appropriate. Industrial development along the southern side of Alexander Road may result in lower residential amenity outcomes, potential traffic conflicts and a less clear message to drivers as to the nature of the road. It also offers a poorer sense of address for residential properties. As such, the importance of ensuring front doors, post boxes etc. along this length is debatable. Alternative and innovative property access solutions may be more appropriate along this interface to address the lower amenity values of this stretch of Alexander Road.
- 3.10 As such, given the presence of industrial development on the adjacent side of Alexander Road I support the new amendment agreed with Council that no direct vehicle access be provided from Alexander Road to sites within Area B. However, in order to maintain an acceptable urban design outcome on this portion of Alexander Road, I propose that a fencing control be established in order to ensure a basic level of amenity and surveillance. Limiting a solid fence to 1.3m in height and allowing an additional 0.5m of visually permeable fencing above that will provide for some street surveillance. This also provides some privacy to private outdoor open space located to the rear or side of the dwellings.
- 3.11 In summary, whilst I appreciate the potential traffic conflict, from an urban design perspective, I support the proposal to reduce the speed limit on Alexander Road to 60km/hr. In Area A, I strongly recommend that dwellings be allowed and encouraged to actively front Alexander Road, to achieve both better housing design flexibility and streetscape outcomes, including cycle and pedestrian safety due to surveillance. This will aid the integration of Alexander Road with its adjacent residential community and deliver improved street surveillance and visual appeal. In Area B however, which has an industrial interface, alternative individual property access is appropriate to create a residential address, while controls on fencing ensure an acceptable visual interface and some surveillance of Alexander Road.

DATE 27 July 2015

NAME Lauren White

POSITION Senior Urban Designer, Harrison Grierson Consultants Limited

SIGNED 
