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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Memorandum

To Scott Dickson
Bonisch Consultants

From Mike Moore

Date 22 August 2024

Subject Response to Invercargill City Council further information request, Proposed Farm Machinery Sales and Service Business, 30 Wallacetown Lorneville Highway, Invercargill.

This memorandum is in response to the s92 request for further information by Invercargill City Council dated 26 July 2024. The questions related to 'rural character and amenity' are copied below with responses provided.

1. *The description and analysis of the existing landscape and values is well described but brief and relies heavily on the photos to provide an understanding of the site and context. The photos are useful and are considered sufficient in number and to have been taken from sufficiently representative locations.*
 - a) *Does the Assessment consider that highly productive land has a bearing on rural character and landscape values and if so, will there be any landscape/ rural character effects as a result of the proposal in this location?*

Response

The site is within an area mapped as 'high value soils' in the Invercargill City District Plan (ICDP) and the Plan is clear that these soils are valued for rural productivity (food

production) reasons¹. I consider that the high quality of the soil is a physical attribute underpinning the rural landscape character of the site and some of its context. The ICDP is clear that rural character and amenity is a landscape value². My report has assessed the effects of the proposed development on rural character values.

2. *Under the assessment of 'physical effects' the Assessment states: "The proposed development will result in another rural service building in an area already characterised by such buildings, and other commercial premises. It will reinforce the rural service centre / settlement character at the expense of open rural character, but in my assessment, landscape sensitivity to development of this nature is low, due to the existing character."*

- a) *Due to the description of the existing character being limited, the attributes that make up the 'rural service centre / settlement character' (other than other rural service buildings) are not clear. Can the Assessment expand briefly on the land use/ building form patterns (e.g setbacks, building heights, and relationship between buildings and surrounding open space) and describe the specific way/s in which the proposal may be in keeping with these to help determine the extent to which the proposal will reinforce this character?*
- b) *Similarly, can the Assessment expand on the nature and degree to which open rural character will change as a result of the proposal as a rationale to support the statement above?*
- c) *Can the assessment expand on the assessment of the proposal against the Objectives and Policies relating to rural character and amenity (noting that the subject site is within the Rural Zone, not the adjacent Business 5 Zone).*

Response

- a) In my report, I have discussed the area to the south and east of the site as having a rural service hub / settlement character. Some of this area is zoned Business (Rural Service) but some is zoned Rural in the ICDP.

¹ ICDP SOIL-O1, SOIL-P3, RURZ-P4

² ICDP RURZ-O2, RURZ-P1, RURZ-P3

The features that underpin the character of this area include large commercial buildings in the approximate range of 500 – 2400m² and approximately 5 – 10m high, large paved or graveled forecourt and storage areas, high visual prominence of signage, large areas where there are parked vehicles / machinery and stockpiles, and some open lawn areas. Setbacks of buildings from road and other site boundaries are variable, as are building colours. There are a few trees and hedges but overall, vegetative elements have modest visual impact. Overall, the character of this area is much less open than is typical in rural areas, dominated by built form – typically with low pitch gables roof forms, and land use is dominated by commercial rather than rural activities.

The proposed development involves erection of a building within the scale range of the buildings present in the area, with a similar commercial function, form and character. It will have associated signage and parked vehicles / machinery as well as large open grassed areas. I consider that it will integrate readily in this context and that the proposed tree planting, once well established, will provide visual softening and balance to the built elements, providing for a higher level of amenity than currently exists on most other commercial sites in this area.

- b) The rural character will be adversely affected by the proposed development. Openness will be modified by the proposed establishment of a large commercial building and associated machinery display etc., naturalness will likewise be reduced, and rural character will also be modified by the change from grazing / cropping to rural service commercial activity. As noted in my report however, I assess the degree of this effect as low in this situation because the rural character is already modified by the adjacent commercial rural service centre character – i.e. the sensitivity of the site to this change is low, given the context. The proposed development represents the expansion of an area of existing rural service settlement character rather than the introduction of elements with non-rural character in an area devoid of these presently.
- c) I have identified and provided comment on ICDP objectives and policies considered most relevant to the landscape related aspects of rural character and amenity. I consider that the only other Plan provisions that could be addressed are

RURZ-P12, RURZ-P16, and RURZ-P18. My comments on these are outlined in the table below:

Objective / Policy	Comment
<p><i>RURZ-P12 - Incidence of Daylight and Sunlight</i> <i>To ensure light and sunlight incidence to the subject property and to neighbouring properties for amenity, home heating (energy conservation) and health reasons.</i></p>	<p>The proposed building is well set back from neighbouring properties and will not impact light or sunlight to these properties.</p>
<p><i>RURZ-P16 - Glare</i> <i>To ensure freedom of nuisance from glare.</i></p>	<p>External building materials will primarily be Colorsteel roof paneling and Paneltec Indurabond wall cladding. The colour will be primarily dark grey and it is not anticipated that any nuisance from glare will be generated.</p>
<p><i>RURZ-P18 - Lightspill</i> <i>To avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of lightspill.</i></p>	<p>Outdoor lighting is restricted to security lighting around the building and concrete pad area. All lighting will be directed downwards and will be well removed from property boundaries. Lightspill levels will comply with District Plan requirements.</p>

3. Under 'visual effects' the Assessment describes publicly accessible views from the adjacent road and private views from two nearby dwellings (24 and 70A Wallacetown Lorneville Highway).

The Assessment explains that while there are other dwellings in the area, the proposed facility will be effectively screened from these places by existing plantings and / or built form.

It is noted that there are buildings other than dwellings in the immediate vicinity, with different groups of people e.g. staff and visitors at businesses / commercial buildings, with potential views.

While it is recognised that development that is in keeping with the landscape character may have no adverse landscape and visual effects even if it is highly visible and a noticeable change, it is helpful to be able to show that the potential audience has been considered.

- a) Can the Assessment briefly expand on the potential viewing audience associated with the area from where the proposal will be seen and the nature and degree of effects or explain why they may not be impacted.*
- b) Can the Assessment clarify whether the existing (screening) plantings referred to are on the applicant's property, and if not, whether/how views to the project site may be impacted if vegetation was to be removed?*
- c) It is noted that there are potential elevated views from the railway overpass on the Wallacetown Lorneville Highway and may be potential for views from a dwelling at 78 Wallacetown Lorneville Highway. Has the Assessment considered visual effects from these locations?*
- d) In assessing views from the private property at 24 Wallacetown Lorneville Highway, the Assessment notes that proposed planting will completely screen views within 5 years. There currently appear to be gaps below and between the existing boundary vegetation towards the northeast corner of the site, however the proposed Pittosporum screen planting (on the Landscape Mitigation Plan provided) is not continuous through this area. Can the Assessment confirm that views will be completely screened at this boundary?*
- e) Can the Assessment also expand briefly on potential views and visual effects for these residents along their driveway.*

Response

- a) My report has addressed effects of the proposed development on viewing audiences on Wallacetown Lorneville Highway and at the private residential viewpoints at 24 and 70A Wallacetown Lorneville Highway. As noted views of the

development from other roads and private properties in the nearby area will be generally screened by existing plantings and / or built form. As noted in the question however, other potential viewing audiences are people working at or visiting, the commercial premises near the site to the east and south.

From viewpoints nearby to the east, the visibility of the site is modest and blocked to a large degree by existing vegetation and / or buildings. The closest building at 22 Wallacetown Lorneville Highway, has few windows orientating toward the site. Some amenity may be provided by the site's open rural character at present, but in general, I consider that this is limited by relatively low visibility. The proposed development will change the views westward from these viewpoints where visible, reducing openness and replacing rural character with an extension of the rural service centre character. Overall, I assess effects on landscape values as expressed in views from this area as adverse, with the degree of these effects as low at most.

From commercial premises viewpoints on the southern side of Wallacetown Lorneville Highway, once the hedgerow on the southern boundary of the site is removed as proposed, views into the site will be opened up to an extent. I consider that the nature and degree of effects of the development from viewpoints in this area will be as per my assessment from Wallacetown Lorneville Highway – i.e. adverse / low.

- b) Trees in the wider area (not on the site) contribute to screening of the site and will assist to screen the proposed development from various viewpoints in the area surrounding. The degree of screening could wax and wane depending on tree removal or trimming and / or the planting of new trees. Should the site / proposed building become more visible, it is likely to be seen in the context of the other existing commercial buildings and any additional adverse effects on rural character based landscape values would be modest as a result in my assessment.
- c) Views from the railway overpass on Wallacetown Lorneville Highway have been considered. Views to the proposed building site from this viewpoint are blocked by mature vegetation on the overpass embankment.

Views toward the site from the dwelling at 78 Wallacetown Lorneville Highway appear to be well screened by existing mature trees on the property. Should this vegetation be removed, visual effects would be much as assessed for 70 A Wallacetown Lorneville Highway.

- d) The gap in the proposed *Pittosporum tenuifolium* screen plantings along the northern boundary of the site reflects the presence of existing tall trees close to the boundary on the neighbours side, and the likely difficulty of establishing trees near the boundary line in this area. The existing (neighbours) trees currently provide effective screening in my assessment. Should these be removed, it would be appropriate to complete the screening on the site side of the boundary. A condition could be drafted to cater for this possibility. Alternatively, if the robustness of screening is a major issue, a block of trees further removed from the boundary could be provided for as an amendment to the Landscape Mitigation Plan.
- e) The driveway to 24 Wallacetown Lorneville Highway is mainly tree lined and the land to either side currently has a different character i.e. open rural paddock to the west and rural service commercial to the east. The proposed development will alter the character of the views westward, changing it from rural farmland to rural commercial service. The proposed building is well removed from the boundary however (over 90m), and openness will be maintained to an extent. Should screening of the building be preferred over maintenance of a more open character, further planting could be provided for on the Landscape Mitigation Plan.

I assess the visual effects of the proposed development on landscape values as experienced from the driveway as adverse / moderate-low. This is because rural character, whilst already modified by the adjacent rural service commercial character to the east, will be replaced by an extension to this rural service commercial character, with openness and naturalness reduced.

- 4. *Can the Assessment consider potential landscape and visual effects during the construction period (and provide an estimated construction timeframe) particularly given the proposal to remove some existing perimeter vegetation as part of the project.*

Response

As is normal for most projects, the construction phase is likely to involve short term adverse effects of a greater magnitude than the finished product due to removal of vegetation, temporary construction sheds and stockpiles etc. I am informed the estimated construction timeframe is likely to be approximately 12 – 18 months. I consider that the temporary, short-term nature of these construction phase effects reduces their significance.

5. *The Assessment states that 'The planting illustrated in Figure 6 and specified in Appendix A, is to be implemented within 6 months of the completion of the building.' Has the Assessment considered earlier implementation to more quickly manage any identified landscape and visual effects?*

Response

I understand that the applicant is open to establishment of mitigation planting earlier than within six months of the completion of the building. An alternative could be 'within six months of the resource consent being issued'. Depending on the extent of earthworks needed, there would appear to be no major conflict with planting establishment and construction activity. The proposed boundary plantings at least, present no difficulties in terms of early establishment. Earlier planting would provide for quicker visual mitigation.



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