

## Medium Density Plan Change – PC:I

### Summary Statement - Andrew Burns - Urban Design

- [1] My name is Andrew Burns. My qualifications and experience are set out in my statement of evidence.
- [2] I have provided urban design advice to Palmerston North City Council (“**the Council**”) on Plan Change I (“**PC:I**”) since August 2022 and co-authored the ‘PNCC MRZ Standards Report’ dated November 2023. My evidence is outlined in a statement dated 25 July 2025 and reply evidence dated 22 August 2025.
- [3] This summary addresses the key points from my primary evidence, reply evidence and provides a response to matters relevant to urban design raised by submitters. It also addresses Expert Conferencing between me, Mr Lindenberg and Ms Jenkin that concluded in a Joint Witness Statement (“**JWS**”) dated 21 August 2025.
- [4] As part of preparing the MRZ Standards Report, McIndoe Urban undertook a range of urban design work including:
- (a) Adopting the Medium Density Residential Standards (“**MDRS**”) as a useful starting point to achieve the PC:I objectives but tested <sup>1</sup> and modified these to achieve better amenity outcomes both on-site and for neighbours.
  - (b) As ‘proof of concept’, medium density dwelling outcomes that complied with the notified standards were tested on a range of typical Palmerston North lots showing that realistic and successful development is achievable<sup>2</sup>.
- [5] The testing programme concluded that it is possible to take an approach to standards that is more nuanced than MDRS to achieve higher quality outcomes that better achieve a well-functioning environment and enable intensification. And, that when infill lots in Palmerston North are developed, that the proposed package of controls will readily allow sensible configurations of suitably sized multi-unit developments.
- [6] In my primary evidence and reply evidence I addressed submissions relevant to urban design and organised these under the proposed PC:I provisions. Consideration of those

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<sup>1</sup> Comparative sunlight shading studies, utilisation of PAUP standards testing by MUL, 2015, minimum site area evaluation, incremental MD infill studies in Highbury, HIRB recession plane testing, yield analysis on a typical PN block, visual dominance,

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Burns SOE, Attachment C ‘Lot Testing Urban Design Memo #7’.

submissions have led to the following key recommendations (note I refer to the 'blue-line' version of the MRZ provisions as the latest iteration prepared by Ms Jenkin):

- (a) The MRZ extents (MRZ-R7) are not amended as sought by Kevin Keliher<sup>3</sup> or by Matt Lindenberg for Kāinga Ora<sup>4</sup>. Related to zone extents, I recommend the location of the boundary at a 'mid-block' position is maintained and not amended as sought by Ash Garstang<sup>5</sup>.
- (b) MRZ-O2 and MRZ-P3: The notified objective and policy are retained (with minor blue-line amendments which I support<sup>6</sup>) as they establish a logical cascade from urban design vision (objective) to implementation (policy and rules). This approach establishes the framework for the standards that follow. Important aspects of the notified policies give clarity on the what the 'Purpose of the Medium Density Zone' (MRZ-O1) means: '*...buildings that are compatible with the predominantly residential use of the Zone, reflect the planned built form...*'.
- (c) MRZ-S1 and MRZ-S2: An 11m maximum building height in combination with the stepped recession plane (HIRB) of 5m + 45° and 2.8m + 45° is appropriate to enable intensification to 3 storeys while achieving acceptable sunlight, visual dominance and privacy outcomes. I do not support the submission to apply 5m + 45° along all site boundaries for the reasons in my evidence<sup>7</sup>. The notified, stepped recession plane is a better outcome than the MDRS (4m + 60°) because it allows for flexibility on site while addressing potential adverse neighbour effects.
- (d) MRZ-S3: I support the blue-line provisions that allow for no setback for garages and habitable rooms (following a pre-hearing meeting with Mr Teo-Sherrell) for up to 7m in length and contained beneath a 2.8m + 45° HIRB. This better enables intensification on smaller lots whilst having minimal shading and dominance effects. However, in my s 42A report (at paragraph 103) I recommended that shading effects on adjoining sites are removed as a matter of discretion, whilst privacy effects were retained. Ms Jenkin has noted a minor correction is required to the MRZ-S3. I note a successful local example of a zero-lot exists fronting Albert Street and Fairway Grove. Lastly, whilst not reflected in the blue-line version, I recommend retaining the

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<sup>3</sup> Kevin Keliher argues for density based on distance from The Square. I address this at para 48 of my SOE.

<sup>4</sup> Mr Lindenberg has a preference for selective application of accessibility criteria. I address this in my Reply Evidence, paras 23 – 28 and associated diagram page 8. Also JWS issue 1.

<sup>5</sup> SO-117.1 requests zoning is not 'cut down the middle of residential blocks'. An alternative position is not provided. Addressed at Andrew Burns SOE, paras 51 – 53.

<sup>6</sup> JWS, issue 2.

<sup>7</sup> SO-199.31 and addressed at Andrew Burns SOE, paras 77 – 80, Reply Evidence paras 11, 12. Also JWS issue 4.

alternative 2.5m garage setback standard in addition to the 5.5m standard as tested in the MRZ Standards Report (page 19) as this supports intensive forms of development.

- (e) MRZ-S4 (Building coverage): the notified 50% standard is appropriate, enabling intensification while maintaining appropriate residential amenity through the package of other standards. I support the blue-line provisions retaining matters of discretion for shading and privacy. These are relevant to address the potential impacts of the placement of additional building form resulting from infringement of the coverage standard.
- (f) MRZ-S6 (Shade): I agree with the removal of this standard as it contradicts MRZ-S7 and PRZ-P3 (as sought by Kāinga Ora, Phocus Planning and the Council). As the MRZ intensifies with taller and more intensive building development, access to sunlight will become more important.
- (g) MRZ-S7 (Outdoor living space): I agree with the blue-line version where a 30m<sup>2</sup>/4.5m diameter ground-level outdoor living space applies to dwellings with three or more bedrooms and the 20m<sup>2</sup>/4.0m diameter space for dwellings up to and including two bedrooms as sought by Leith Consulting <sup>8</sup>.
- (h) MRZ-S8 (Outlook space): the notified 6m x 4m, 3m x 3m and 1m x 1m are retained, with a correction of an omission, so that secondary or additional windows from the primary living and bedroom spaces are required to be 1m x 1m. This is addressed in the blue-line version. Mr Lindenberg and Kāinga Ora seek reduction of the primary bedroom outlook to 1m x 1m. I disagree and I addressed this in my Reply Evidence.<sup>9</sup>
- (i) MRZS-10 (Stormwater attenuation): Retained as notified and in the blue-line version, including Clause 3 regarding the location of stormwater detention tanks being restricted to side and rear yards. Even when screened, stormwater tanks in the front yard would appear as a screened tank. Service elements in a front yard are unacceptable from a visual amenity perspective.
- (j) MRZ-S12 (Façade glazing): Retain as notified with minor blue-line text amendments as this standard has been calibrated to relate to three different types of frontages (front, secondary and with integral garage) and aligns with testing in the MRZ Standards Report.

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<sup>8</sup> SO-170.7 and addressed at Andrew Burns SOE, paras 115, 116.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Burns Reply Evidence, paras 14 – 19. Also JWS issue 5.

- (k) MRZ-S13 (front door orientation): Retain as notified (including the minor blue-line wording change) because front door orientation provides for good urban design outcomes. The standard provides for sufficient building layout / design flexibility on site while achieving important street-to-building legibility outcomes. The wording change identified by Phocus Planning helpfully enables side entrances from accessways. To clarify I have prepared a diagram to support MRZ-S13 and that is included in the blue line version of the provisions.
- (l) MRZ-S14 (Garages): Retain as notified because controlling garage door width as a proportion of frontage achieves important public amenity outcomes - visual interest enhancing the visual amenity of the street; contributing to public safety by facilitating façade treatments that allow outlook over the street and informal surveillance.
- (m) MRZ-S15 (On-site carparking): Retain as notified as expanses of parking at the street front are inconsistent with the required streetscape outcomes (MRZ-P3.5), and the proportion required by this standard is consistent with MRZ-S14 which seeks to give effect to positive streetscape outcomes and satisfy Policy MRZ-P3.5.
- (n) MRZ-S20 (Fences): I support the amendment sought by the Council and the consequential blue-line amendments agreed with Ms Jenkin and Ms Fraser to simplify the standard and address fence height including within visibility splays. I prepared diagrams to test outcomes for this standard.<sup>10</sup> The amended fence standard will provide for front boundary definition and reasonable privacy while also maintaining a visual connection between the dwelling and the street.

[7] I participated in Expert Conferencing on 21 August 2025, from which a JWS was prepared. This is reflected throughout my summary above. To clarify, agreement was reached on:

- (a) MRZ-O2: Retained but with deletion of sub clause 'j' (energy efficient) as that is adequately addressed at sub clause 'i' and MRZ-P10 (Energy efficiency).
- (b) SUB-MRZ-P1: Clauses 2 and 3 combined (stormwater and water-sensitive design); to maintain clause 7 (CPTED); and, to amend clause 8 to focus on retention of vegetation rather than broader 'high quality landscapes' outcome.
- (c) MRZ-S8: Outlook space for living rooms is maintained at 6m x 4m.

[8] Disagreement was recorded on:

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<sup>10</sup> Andrew Burns SOE, Attachment H 'Testing fence height provisions'.

- (a) MRZ-R7: Regarding spatial extent of MRZ. I consider that all four accessibility criteria should apply and have addressed this in my Reply Evidence. Mr Lindenberg considers fewer select criteria should apply, enabling additional Kāinga Ora sites to be included within MRZ extents.
- (b) MRZ-S2: Regarding the stepped HIRB standard. Mr Lindenberg seeks application of 5m + 45° along all site boundaries and is opposed to the stepped approach where the rear 1/3 of sites apply the more restrictive 2.8m + 45°.
- (c) MRZ-S8: Outlook space for primary bedrooms. I consider 3m x 3m should be maintained but Mr Lindenberg considers this should be reduced to 1m x 1m.

[9] The proposed provisions for PC:I achieve both intensification for the notified Medium Density Residential Zone (“**MRZ**”) area and a higher level of amenity for future MRZ housing occupants and their adjoining neighbours than the controls set by the MDRS.<sup>11</sup> I am confident that good urban design outcomes for MRZ living environments will be achieved.

**Dated: 29 August 2025**

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<sup>11</sup> MDRS enabled by the RMA-EHS Amendment Act 2021.