

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF JOHN HUDSON - LANDSCAPE

PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE G – AOKAUTERE URBAN GROWTH

1. INTRODUCTION

[1] My full name is John Robert Hudson and I prepared a s 42A report dated 15 September 2023 (**s 42A Report**) and Statement of Reply Evidence dated 28 November 2023 (**Reply Evidence**) on Landscape on behalf of the Palmerston North City Council (**Council**) for proposed Plan Change G: Aokautere Urban Growth to the Palmerston North District Plan (**PCG**).

2. SUMMARY OF UNRESOLVED MATTERS

[2] Design work on the Aokautere structure plan has been undertaken over a number of years. It has been called by some submitters a landscape led plan, but that mischaracterises it, as many disciplines have had input into its development.

[3] The reference to it being 'landscape led' refers to fact that the character of the landscape has been fundamental in the design process, as it should be in any subdivision design. This character is defined by the flat plateaus and the gully network, both strongly contrasting topographical elements (Figure 1). Recognition of this character has been accepted by the other technical experts involved in the design, including urban design, soils, ecology, stormwater and traffic experts, all of whom have worked around the physical constraints of the site. The overall structure plan has been developed with inputs from each expert.



Figure 1. The site is characterised by flat grassed plateaus contrasting with defined gullies.

[4] Some road locations do cross the gullies, which will inevitably involve fill, but this fill should be shaped to reflect the dip of the crossing and allow views out to the gullies that they are crossing (Figure 2).

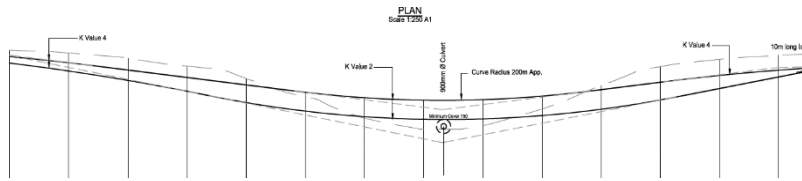


Figure 2. Good examples of roads dipping as they cross a gully.



[5] General fill within existing gully landforms to create extensive flat areas for housing was not part of the design philosophy, and I do not agree that it should be. Roads have also been planned so that some lengths allow views of the gullies rather than causing such views to be privatised by houses on both sides of the street. This type of single sided development (blue in Figure 3) is in locations that provide views over relatively short lengths of road and in locations where double-sided development is difficult due to overall peninsula width (Figure 4).

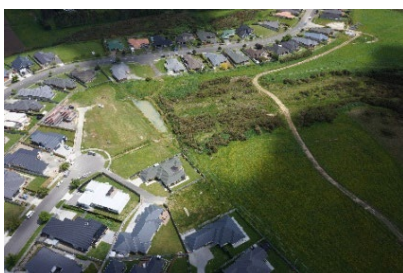


Figure 4. Example of double sided development privatising gully views.

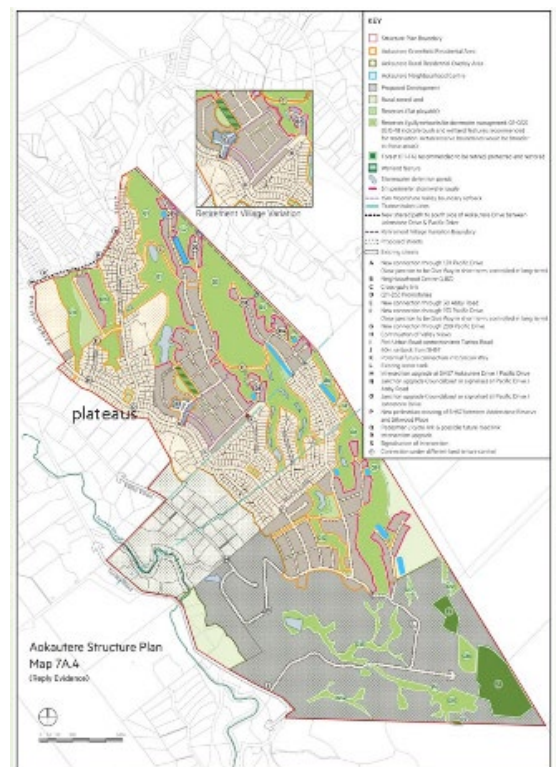


Figure 3. Development on a single side allows views of gullies.

[6] The interface of development with Moonshine Valley has been the subject of submissions. This is recognised in the District Plan as a place of special character and is limited to a minimum lot size of 1.5ha as a way of preserving this special character. Many submissions were received from valley residents with concerns particularly about stormwater and character effects. I focused on character considerations, particularly addressing concerns about visual dominance and overlooking.

[7] To assess these concerns, I analysed cross-sections prepared for that purpose and concluded that the proposed three-story apartments in the notified structure plan should undergo a specific amenity assessment. I also recommended a 15m setback from Moonshine Valley boundaries to safeguard its character. I note that the promontory topography's gullies also naturally limit housing near the valley boundary, acting as a built-in mitigation measure or a natural transition zone, preventing the construction of a 'hard edge' along this boundary (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Gullies along Moonshine Valley boundary cause a natural transition and prevent a hard edge of development along the boundary

[8] Issues around Abby Road have also received attention through submissions. One submitter preferred to allow the head of an existing gully known as the “Abby Road Gully” to be filled in so that it can be developed for housing (Figure 6). While its existing vegetation cover may not be of high value presently, the overall gully topography remains and is an example of an area that would permanently lose a local feature that provides distinctive character to the area. In my opinion, the filling of this gully would be a significant loss to the landscape character of the area, notwithstanding its current condition which is (having regard to the evidence) capable of being improved.



Figure 6. Abby Road gully representative of gully character

John Hudson

4 December 2023