

BEFORE THE DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL

SUB-2016-28 and LUC-2016-169

UNDER the Resource Management
Act 1991

IN THE MATTER of applications for subdivision
and land use consent at 82
Riccarton Road, East Taieri

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MICHAEL WILLIAM MOORE

Dated 4 August 2016

Qualifications and experience

1. My name is Michael William Moore.
2. I hold the degrees of Bachelor of Science from the University of Canterbury, Master of Regional Resource Planning from the University of Otago and the Diploma of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.
3. I have had thirty years professional experience and am currently an independent consultant landscape architect based in Dunedin. Prior to this I worked for the Dunedin and Palmerston North City Councils. My work experience includes the preparation of visual and landscape effects assessments, evidence for Council and Environment Court hearings, and site planning and design for development projects. I have also been involved in the preparation of the landscape related provisions of the Dunedin City and Clutha District Plans.
4. I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note. This evidence has been prepared in accordance with it. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

Scope of evidence

5. I have been asked by the applicant to prepare evidence on the landscape and visual effects of the proposed subdivision. I have had no involvement with this project previously. My evidence will be structured as follows:
 - Site and area description
 - Landscape values
 - The proposed development and mitigation measures

- Landscape effects
 - Visual effects
 - Statutory planning assessment
 - Comment on the Council Planner's report
 - Conclusion
6. An A3 graphic supplement is attached to this evidence, containing plans and photographs.

Site and area description

The site

7. The site is located directly adjacent to Residential zoned land on the southern side of East Taieri. It encompasses the eastern half of a low hill, the south side of which reflects a scarp associated with the Titri fault. There are similar low foothills to the east of the site on the other side of the valley associated with Jaffray Stream, also expressing the presence of this fault. The hill is characterised by a relatively narrow, flattish ridgeline, falling away steeply to either side. The northern slopes become more moderate lower down near the boundary with the residential properties to the north. As discussed in the geotechnical report (Lindqvist, 2016), the underlying geology is schist with a loess covering and there are some shallow slide failures evident on the northern slopes of the hill.
8. The site is predominantly covered in rough pasture with scattered gorse present. There are also areas of tree planting, dominated by Eucalyptus species, particularly on the steep southern face of the hill and associated with the slide features on the northern side.
9. Currently, there are three buildings on the site. These are a small shed near the hill summit, a barn configured as a temporary residence near the eastern end of the ridgeline, and a farm shed on flatter terrain on the south side of the hill near the south-eastern corner of the property. Access is via a right of way off Riccarton Road

East and a formed drive has been developed to give access to these buildings onto and along the ridgeline from the south-east corner of the site. Whilst as yet undeveloped, there is an existing building platform on the hilltop. Building on this platform is subject to conditions including a 7m height restriction, a 30m maximum length, the requirement to finish the building in 'muted tones of green, grey, brown etc, and the requirement to prepare a plan and undertake planting to mitigate the effects of the building. There are currently plantings including flax, cupressus sp and Eucalyptus sp establishing around the building platform.

The area

10. The wider landscape context is that of the lower slopes of Saddle and Jaffrays Hills to the south of East Taieri. The skyline is dominated by the volcanic forms of Saddle and Jaffray Hills, covered in a mixture of pasture and native forest. The mid slope areas have a history of instability in places, which can be discerned in the topography. The large pine plantation (now partly harvested) and scattered tree cover reflects a land management regime that includes measures for land stabilization. The lower slopes are generally gentler in gradient and are a mix of areas with more uniform topography, generally with higher quality pasture cover (reflecting more stable areas), and more hummocky areas generally with rougher pasture (reflecting less stable areas).
11. In general terms the land use pattern is one of residential development in East Taieri, rural residential scale or small scale rural activity on the toe and lower slopes adjacent, with more open rural land on the mid and higher slopes. Whilst there are a considerable number of houses located near Saddle Hill Road in certain areas, the higher slopes largely retain an open rural character. Aside from the impact of the quarry on Jaffray Hill the hill tops have strongly expressed natural character. The lower slope areas are in a period of transition reflecting the effects of rural subdivision in recent years.
12. The site is zoned Rural in the Dunedin City District Plan but is directly adjacent to the East Taieri settlement, which is zoned Residential 1. State Highway 1 is approximately 50m from the northern boundary of the site and is separated from it by a line of residential sections and dwellings. The rural properties adjacent to the west,

south and east are either small rural lots of approximately 6 – 7ha (like the site), or smaller rural residential scale sections of approximately 1 – 3ha.

13. Figures 1 - 6 illustrate the character of the site and area.

Landscape Values

Recognised landscape values

14. The site and surrounding area have no special recognition in either the operative or proposed Dunedin City District Plans as far as landscape values are concerned. The Saddle Hill Landscape Conservation Area (operative DP) and Saddle Hill Significant Natural Landscape (2GP) cover the summits of Saddle and Jaffrays Hills and the higher and mid slope areas, but do not extend to the toe slopes, including the site.
15. As the site is within the Rural zone in the operative District Plan amenity values generally associated with rural character are also relevant. 'Key elements of rural character' mentioned under Objective 6.2.2 and Policy 6.3.5 in the Plan include a predominance of natural over human made features, a high ratio of open space relative to the built environment, significant areas of pasture, crops, forestry or indigenous vegetation, the presence of farmed animals and the absence of urban elements (infrastructure / sealed roads etc).
16. In the 2GP, this area is within the Rural - Coastal zone and the values described for this zone similarly include those associated with natural and rural character.

Values assessment

17. The small hill on which the property is located is a natural landform feature of localized significance, forming the immediate skyline from viewpoints nearby and contributing to the landscape character of the East Taieri area. Its natural character has been modified by the temporary dwelling on Lot 1 and to a lesser extent by the house on the adjacent property at 86 Riccarton Road, which are located on the ridgeline. The ridgeline location of the Lot 1 dwelling, coupled with its light colouring makes it particularly visually prominent with associated adverse effects on natural character based rural amenity values.

18. More generally, the lower slopes in this area have a favoured aspect and are close to the settlements of East Taieri and Mosgiel. It is my assessment that these factors mean that the moderately high rural built density in this area does not appear inappropriate in this setting, where sensitively located.

The proposed development and mitigation measures

The proposed development

19. The applicant has taken note of the concerns expressed in the Council Landscape Architect's and Planner's reports and as a result proposes to amend the application as follows, and as illustrated in Figure 7.
20. The application is now for just two lots, these being Lot 1 (previously lots 1 and d 2), and Lot 2 (previously Lot 3). The building platform proposed for Lot 1 encompasses the temporary residence but makes provision for this to be extended or redeveloped. The existing building platform on previous lot 2 will be surrendered in acknowledgement that a building on this site would be on the highest point of the hill and unavoidably prominent, at least from some viewpoints. The building platform proposed for Lot 2 (previously lot 3) will be largely unchanged except that the location will be shifted uphill by 10m to increase the distance from the residential properties to the north and to provide better for outward views. A suite of mitigation conditions are proposed for both lots as follows:

Proposed mitigation measures

Lot 1

- (a) All buildings, including all accessory buildings (with the exception of the existing barn near the southern boundary of the site and the existing small shed near the hill summit), are to be located within the identified building platform.

- (b) A 6m maximum building height limit is to apply above existing or modified ground level for a dwelling, and any accessory buildings shall be a maximum of 4m height above existing or modified ground level.
- (c) All buildings will be finished in naturally weathered timber or locally appropriate stone, or in colours that have low levels of contrast with the colours of the rural landscape setting. Painted surfaces will have light reflectivity ratings of no more than 20%. The existing temporary dwelling and the existing small shed will be painted to comply with this condition within 1 year of consent being granted.
- (d) All services are to be located below ground
- (e) All earthworks will be designed to blend seamlessly with the natural contours surrounding. To assist visual integration, there shall be no modification to the existing contours to the north and west of the proposed building platform.
- (f) The driveway is to retain an informal rural character with gravel surface and soft edges (i.e. no kerbs). Monumental gates and driveway lighting is not permitted.
- (g) Water tanks will be sited, and / or buried and / or screened (by planting) to have minimal visual impact from beyond the property.
- (h) Fencing is to be confined to standard rural post and wire construction or stone walls using locally appropriate rock.
- (i) A landscape development plan that will be implemented to mitigate the adverse effects of a dwelling on the rural character and amenity values of the area is to be submitted to Council. This is to be in general accordance with the guidelines in Appendix A.

Lot 2

- (a) The dwelling and any associated accessory buildings are to be located within the identified building platform (note this does not include rural activity buildings).

- (b) A 7m maximum building height limit is to apply above existing or modified ground level for a dwelling, and any accessory buildings and / or rural activity buildings shall be a maximum of 4m height above existing or modified ground level.
- (c) All buildings will be finished in naturally weathered timber or locally appropriate stone, or in colours that have low levels of contrast with the colours of the rural landscape setting. Painted surfaces will have light reflectivity ratings of no more than 20%.
- (d) All services are to be located below ground
- (e) All earthworks will be designed to blend seamlessly with the natural contours surrounding except that retaining walls are permitted where they will be predominantly screened from viewpoints external to the site by buildings or plantings.
- (f) The driveway is to retain an informal rural character with gravel surface and soft edges (i.e. no kerbs). Monumental gates and driveway lighting is not permitted.
- (g) Water tanks will be sited, and / or buried and / or screened (by planting) to have minimal visual impact from beyond the property.
- (h) Fencing is to be confined to standard rural post and wire construction or stone walls using locally appropriate rock.
- (i) A landscape development plan that will be implemented to mitigate the adverse effects of a dwelling on the rural character and amenity values of the area is to be submitted to Council. This is to be in general accordance with the guidelines in Appendix A.

Discussion

21. It is my assessment that the amended development and associated mitigation measures proposed, will have significantly reduced potential adverse effects on rural character amenity values than the development as applied for. The key feature is

that apart from the Lot 1 building platform, including the existing temporary dwelling, there will now be no other node of built development on the hill top, and the most visually prominent site (previous Lot 2) will now not be developed.

22. Whilst the bulk of built form on the Lot 1 platform could be expanded, visual impact associated with this will be effectively controlled by the proposed colour and height controls, controls over earthworks, and the requirement to undertake mitigation planting. The building is presently cut into the hill to some extent, which helps to integrate it and this effect is protected by the proposed earthworks controls. The proposed 6m height control reflects the approximate height of the existing building and restricts future development to no more than this.
23. It is my opinion that a dwelling on Lot 2 (previous Lot 3) will integrate readily in this location with a landform backdrop and close to residential development. The proposed design and appearance controls will ensure visual impact is modest and will protect rural character. This site is, in my opinion, well suited to residential use, having a sunny aspect and being at a low level in the landscape, close to other residential development. Climatically and in terms of visual prominence it is much preferable to the site on previous Lot 2.
24. With only two lots now proposed, non-compliance with the District Plan Rural zone density expectations has been reduced.

Landscape effects

25. It is my assessment that the effects of the amended development on the rural landscape character as currently existing, will be adverse but only to a negligible – minor extent. There is already built development on Lot 1 and this could increase in scale but not in height. The existing light colour of the building will be remedied and this will have a significant effect in reducing visual prominence. Overall, in relation to Lot 1 and considering the existing built impact, I consider that any effects will be neutral or minor at worst.
26. With regard to Lot 2 (previous Lot 3), the development proposed means that there will be an additional dwelling but this will integrate well in this setting of small scale rural sites, located adjacent to residential development and with a hill backdrop. A house on this site will appear a comfortable fit in this landscape.

27. When factoring in what could happen as of right, the landscape effects appear even more acceptable in my assessment. The landowner can develop a house on the previous Lot 2 building platform that is up to 7m high and 30m long. To do this the existing temporary dwelling would have to be reconfigured as an accessory building (i.e. have its kitchen removed) but this would not necessarily result in any change to its external appearance. This means that there could be two buildings of significant scale on the ridgeline. In comparison, the amended proposal avoids any building on the highly sensitive previous Lot 2 platform and provides for further but strictly controlled, development on Lot 1. It also provides for development of a second dwelling on Lot 2 (previous Lot 3) but as discussed, this will integrate readily. Assessed against this scenario, I believe that the effects of the amended proposal are positive overall.

Visual effects

28. The following is my assessment of the visual effects of the proposal from the most significant viewpoints surrounding.

State highway 1

29. The site is visible to varying extents from an approximately 2.5km stretch of State Highway 1 from East Taieri settlement adjacent, and westward. To the east, it is largely screened by intervening landform. It is largely the higher slopes and crest of the hill top that is visible, behind houses (at East Taieri) or foreground plantings (further to the west).

30. As illustrated in Figure 2, from East Taieri the existing building on proposed Lot 1 is visible on the skyline. The proposed development may result in a changed and / or expanded built form but this will be no higher and will be coloured to relate more to the vegetation colour of the hill slopes and eventually, surrounding plantings. The proposed controls over earthworks combined with the defined location and scale of the building platform will ensure that the visual impact of building on this site is not significantly greater than at present.

31. The proposed Lot 2 site will be mainly screened by intervening built development but where seen will have low visual impact due to the proposed colour and height controls combined with the landform backdrop.
32. As of right, a 7m high dwelling could be built on previous Lot 2. This would be partially screened by landform but would be visible as a new skyline element on the topmost point of the hill and would have at least moderate adverse effects from this viewpoint.
33. From more westerly viewpoints, the hill is seen in profile as illustrated in Figure 3. The amended proposal avoids visibility of a house on the hilltop from this viewing angle and neither of the now proposed building sites are or will be, visible. In my opinion a house on the hilltop (the previous Lot 2 platform) from this perspective would be particularly prominent and the avoidance of this effect is a significant positive aspect of the amended proposal.
34. Overall, it is my assessment that the visual effects from State highway 1 are adverse negligible – minor as assessed against the existing environment, or positive when considered in the context of what could be built as of right.

Properties between the site and State Highway 1

35. The site borders twelve residential properties located to the south of State Highway 1. Two submitters, one in support and one opposed, live in this area. The site forms part of the rural backdrop to the south of these properties, and of other properties further to the west. Figures 1 and 2 give some indication of the nature of views toward the site from these properties.
36. The main visual effect of the proposed development from these properties will be the development of a dwelling on Lot 2 (previously Lot 3). The development of a house on this site will modify the existing rural character in this vicinity but it is noteworthy that none of the closest neighbours have submitted in opposition to the application, in fact, W and G Vidal (87 Main South Road) have submitted in support. To mitigate any adverse effects, the amended proposal now locates the Lot 2 building platform an additional 10m further away from the boundary in this area making the minimum setback 30m. Planting could be established along this boundary as a buffer if appropriate however, visual effects do not appear to be a significant issue to these

neighbours given the lack of submissions. I note that the sunny aspect and natural outlook from these dwellings is northward and away from the site.

37. Margaret Scott of 103 Main South Road has submitted in opposition however. With regard to her property, the proposed Lot 2 platform is at least 115m from her boundary and not within the main focus of the southern outlook from her property. Given this situation I do not consider that any adverse privacy or amenity effects will be significant.
38. In terms of the visual effects of the proposal on these adjacent properties more generally, there is already built development on the proposed Lot 1 platform and the amended proposal will effectively control any expansion of this. It also avoids a dwelling being built on the hill summit (previous Lot 2).
39. Overall, considering the lack of submissions in opposition and the avoidance and mitigation of adverse effects associated with the amended proposal, I assess the visual effects of the proposed development from these viewpoints as adverse in nature but no more than minor in magnitude.

Taieri Plains and Mosgiel

40. As illustrated in Figures 4 and 5, the site is visible from places on the Taieri Plains including Mosgiel (where not screened by foreground elements). From these areas the low hill form blends with the higher hill slopes behind and is hard to distinguish as a discrete feature. The existing building on Lot 1 has a considerable level of visual prominence given the contrast of its light colour with the darker colours of its rural landscape backdrop.
41. The amended proposed development will result in reduced visual impact of the building on Lot 1 due to the proposed controls over height and, in particular, colour. It avoids the introduction of a house on previous Lot 2, instead, providing for building on new Lot 2 where it will be lower in the landscape and well controlled as to colour. Overall, I assess visual effects in relation to the currently existing environment as adverse – minor, and as neutral or positive when what could be developed as of right is also considered.

Residential viewpoints to the south

42. There are a number of houses located on rural properties to the south of the site. As shown in Figure 6 the low hill form on which the site is located is seen as a mid-ground feature from this area. A dwelling on previous Lot 2 would be visually prominent on the ridgeline although the establishing trees on the southern face of the hill would provide screening. The existing temporary dwelling on Lot 1 is prominent from lower level viewpoints where it is seen against the sky but less prominent from higher viewpoints.
43. The proposed development will avoid the visual impacts associated with development on the previous Lot 2 site but the scale of the existing dwelling on Lot 1 could increase. The effects of this will be effectively mitigated by the proposed height, colour and planting controls. The (amended) Lot 2 site is screened from this side of the hill.
44. Overall, I assess visual effects in relation to the currently existing environment from this angle as adverse – minor, and as neutral or positive when what could be developed as of right is also considered.

Statutory planning assessment

Operative Dunedin City District Plan

45. Under the operative Dunedin City District Plan, the site is within the rural zone and is located outside the Saddle Hill Landscape Conservation Area overlay. The Plan provisions relevant to the landscape and visual effects of this application are found in the Rural, Landscape and Subdivision sections of the plan. Brief comment on these is provided below as follows:

Rural Section

Objective 6.2.2

Maintain and enhance the amenity values associated with the character of the rural area

Policy 6.3.5

Require rural subdivision and activities to be of a nature, scale, intensity and location consistent with maintaining the character of the rural area and to be undertaken in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on rural character. Elements of the rural character of the district include, but are not limited to:

- (a) A predominance of natural features over human made features,
- (b) High ratio of open space relative to the built environment,
- (c) Significant areas of vegetation in pasture, crops, forestry and indigenous vegetation,
- (d) presence of large numbers of farmed animals,
- (e) noises, smells and effects associated with the use of rural land for a wide range of agricultural, horticultural and forestry purposes,
- (f) low population densities relative to urban areas,
- (g) generally unsealed roads,
- (h) absence of urban infrastructure.

Policy 6.3.6

Avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of buildings, structures and vegetation on the amenity of adjoining properties.

Policy 6.3.14

Subdivision or land use activities should not occur where this may result in cumulative adverse effects in relation to:

- (a) amenity values
- (b) rural character

Assessment matters

6.7.3 Amenity values

- (i) The effect that the activity will have on amenity values

6.7.4 Cumulative Effect

The cumulative effect of the activity on the natural and physical resources of the City including, but not limited to, cumulative adverse effects in relation to:

- (i) Amenity values
- (ii) Rural character

6.7.9 Bulk and location

The bulk and location of buildings and their effect upon the amenity values of the site, adjoining sites, adjoining roads and the surrounding areas.

6.7.13 Visual impact

- (i) The visual impact arising from an activity on the character of the rural landscape, visual amenity and significant views.
- (ii) The potential effect of structures on significant views from public viewpoints, including visibility from State Highway 1.
- (iii) The effect of an activity on the open amenity of the rural area

6.7.15 Residential Units

- (i) The cumulative effects of an increased density of residential development in this location
- (iv) The extent to which a residential unit on the site affects the amenity and economic well-being of neighbouring properties.
- (v) The degree to which amenities relating to the open nature of the environment are compromised.

6.7.21 Trees

The objectives and policies of the Trees Section

6.7.25 Landscape

The objectives, policies and assessment matters of the Landscape Section.

Comment

46. It is my assessment that rural character and associated amenity values will be maintained by the amended development proposal. There is a building existing on the proposed Lot 1 site and any additional effects associated with the development of this site will be mitigated by the proposed controls and will be no more than minor. Likewise, the Lot 2 site, controlled as proposed, will integrate readily and have no more than minor adverse effects on rural character and rural amenity values in this location. The amended proposal avoids potentially significant adverse effects associated with building on the previous Lot 2 building platform.
47. Residential development at the scale proposed is consistent with the existing rural character in this area and the location of the building sites minimizes any adverse

effects. There appears to be little concern from adjoining land owners regarding the visual effects of the proposed development. The proposed setbacks along with the other mitigation measures will be sufficient to ensure that the amenity of adjoining properties is protected. Given the ability to avoid significant adverse effects associated with development on previous Lot 2, to mitigate any additional adverse effects associated with the development of the Lot 1 site, and to appropriately locate and control the development on amended Lot 2, any adverse cumulative effects on rural character and amenity values will be minor at worst. There are no significant adverse effects from State Highway 1 or other public viewpoints.

Landscape Section

Objective 14.2.3

Ensure that land use and development do not adversely affect the quality of the landscape.

Objective 14.2.4

Encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of Dunedin's landscape

Policy 14.3.4

Encourage development which integrates with the character of the landscape and enhances landscape quality

Assessment Matters

14.7.1 Visibility

The effects of the visibility of the proposed activity or development from the main public viewpoints.

14.7.2 Adverse Effects

The extent to which any adverse effects on the landscape can be avoided, remedied or mitigated

14.7.3 Sympathetic Siting and Design

The extent to which the activity or development is sympathetic to the forms, character and scale of the landscape in its siting and design.

14.7.4 Landscape Features and Characteristics

The extent to which the activity or development impacts upon the important landscape features and characteristics to be protected, preserved or conserved (identified in part 14.5 of this section) within the relevant landscape management area.

14.7.5 Compatibility of Scale and Character

The extent to which the activity or development is compatible with its landscape setting in terms of its scale and character

Comment

48. It is my assessment that the proposed development is consistent with the provisions of the landscape section. Development of the scale and density proposed is a comfortable fit with the existing character in this location and it will be controlled to ensure that the visual impact of new buildings will be low. The amended proposal avoids what I consider to be potentially significant adverse landscape effects associated with built development on the previous Lot 2 platform. The site is not within a landscape management area so assessment matter 14.7.4 is not relevant.

Subdivision Section

18.6.1 Assessment Matters

(g) The appropriateness of retaining amenity planting or planting trees and other vegetation on the site to maintain or enhance the amenity of the area and the need for conditions relating to landscape planting and maintenance

(q) Lot Size and Dimension including:

- The siting of each allotment in terms of the topography*
- The effects that the layout and access have on the landform*

(s) Natural Character and Heritage Values, including:

- Whether subdivision enhances the retention of the character and values of these features*

Comment

49. Conditions requiring a planting plan for both proposed dwelling sites are recommended as part of a suite of mitigation measures designed to minimize any adverse effects of built development on rural character and associated amenity values. In my assessment the lots relate well to the topography and the amended proposal avoids the need for significant earthworks to provide access to previous Lot 2. The amended proposal also retains the natural character values of the low hill form in a way that neither the original proposal nor the status quo will do, in that the building platform on the summit is surrendered.

Dunedin City 2GP

50. Under the Proposed Dunedin City District Plan (2GP), the site is within the Rural Coastal Zone and excluded from the Saddle Hill Significant Natural Landscape overlay. Rule 16.7.4 in the 2GP requiring a minimum site size in this zone of 40ha has immediate effect so must be considered along with the Operative Plan provisions. Because the 2GP is at an early stage in the submission and decision making process, limited weight should be given to it.

51. The objectives and policies in the 2GP that are relevant to the landscape and visual effects of this proposal, along with brief comment, are outlined below:

Rural Zones

Objective 16.2.2

The potential for conflict between activities within the rural zones, and between activities within the rural zones and adjoining residential zones is minimized through measures that ensure:

- *The potential for reverse sensitivity effects from more sensitive land uses (such as residential activities) on other permitted activities in the rural zones is minimized*
- *The residential character and amenity of adjoining residential zones is maintained; and*
- *A reasonable level of amenity for residential activities in the rural zones.*

Policy 16.2.2.3

Require all new buildings to be located an adequate distance from site boundaries to ensure a good level of amenity for residential activities on adjoining sites.

Objective 16.2.3

The rural character values and amenity of the rural zones are maintained or enhanced, elements of which include:

A predominance of natural features over human made features;

A high ratio of open space, low levels of artificial light, and a low density of buildings and structures;

Buildings that are rural in nature, scale and design, such as barns and sheds;

A low density of residential activity, which is associated with rural activities;

A high proportion of land containing farmed animals, pasture, crops and forestry;

Significant areas of indigenous vegetation and habitats for indigenous fauna; and

Other elements described in the character descriptions of each rural zone located in Appendix A7.

Policy 16.2.3.1

Require buildings, structures and network utilities to be set back from boundaries and identified ridgelines, and of a height that maintains the rural character values and visual amenity of the rural zones.

Policy 16.2.3.2

Require residential activity to be at a density that maintains the rural character values and visual amenity of the rural zones.

Policy 16.2.3.8

Only allow subdivision activities where the subdivision is designed to ensure any associated future land use and development will maintain or enhance the rural character and visual amenity of the rural zones

Comment

52. As previously discussed, it is my assessment that any adverse effects on the amenity values of adjoining properties, whether these are within the residential or rural zone, will be minimal. Little concern has been expressed by neighbours about the amenity effects of the proposal. The development will integrate well with the existing rural character in this vicinity in terms of scale and density and the building

platform locations and proposed mitigation measures will ensure that the additional visual prominence of built form on the site will be low.

Comment on the Council planners report

53. It is not my intention to comment in detail on the Council planner's report but I do wish to query the relevance of the Saddle Hill Landscape Conservation Area (SHLCA) in her assessment. The site is not located within the SHLCA and therefore the proposed development will have no effect at all on these overlays. Depending on viewpoint, the low hill can be seen as a fore or mid ground element in views toward the SHLCA but this does not mean that the effects of development are effects on the SHLCA or that consideration of the district plan provisions pertaining to this overlay is triggered. It follows then that Objective 14.2.1 and Policies 14.3.1 and 14.3.3 are not relevant to the assessment. Even if the site was within the SHLCA, Objective 14.2.1 and Policy 14.3.1 would not be relevant because these relate to outstanding natural features and landscapes (RMA section 6) and the SHLCA is a section 7 landscape.
54. Another matter raised in the planner's report is precedent, and the potential for comparable sites in the immediate vicinity of the subject site to be similarly developed. In terms of landscape and visual effects, I believe that the only precedent approval of this development would set would be one in which adverse effects on rural character and amenity values are negligible – minor at worst.

Conclusion

55. The site covers part of a low hill which has some localized landscape significance as a natural landform feature, although this is not recognized in either the operative or proposed Dunedin City District Plans. The application submitted was for three Lots, two of which had building platforms in relatively prominent positions on the ridgeline of the hill. In response to concerns expressed in the Council Planner's report, the proposed development has been amended. The key features of the amended proposal are that only two lots are now sought, the most prominent building site has

been surrendered and dwellings are now proposed where the existing temporary dwelling is (Lot 1), and where there is a dominant landform backdrop (Lot 2). A suite of mitigation measures are proposed to apply to both Lots to ensure that landscape and visual effects are minimized.

56. It is my assessment that the proposed amended development will integrate readily with the existing character of its setting. When assessed against the landscape as currently existing, I believe that it will have adverse effects that are no more than minor. However, when what could be developed as of right is also factored in, I believe that the comparative effects of the amended proposal will be positive.

Mike Moore

Landscape Architect

Appendix A

Landscape Development Plan guidelines, Proposed Lots 1 and 2, 82 Riccarton Road East, East Taieri.

Objective of the landscape plan

The landscape plan should be developed to appropriately integrate the building(s) with the landscape and to reduce its visual impact from viewpoints beyond the site.

Recommended species

Species that are appropriate to the character and conditions of the site include:

Exotic species (already present in the area)

- Eucalyptus sp

Indigenous species

- Coprosma crassifolia
- Cordyline australis (Cabbage tree)
- Griselinia littoralis (Broadleaf)
- Kunzea robusta (Kanuka)
- Myrsine australis (Mapou)
- Phormium tenax (Flax)
- Pittosporum tenuifolium (Kohuhu)
- Psuedopanax crassifolius (Lancewood)
- Sophora microphylla (Kowhai)

Information to be provided

- A plan to scale, showing the location, species and spacing of the planting

- A plant schedule outlining the numbers of each species as well as the grade
- A management plan outlining the measures that will be taken to ensure successful establishment including the timing.