

Lianne Darby

From: Barry Knox
Sent: Monday, 18 September 2017 03:20 p.m.
To: Lianne Darby
Subject: SUB-2017-32 Brief Comments

Hi Lianne,

You spoke to me this morning about possible comments on the Hugh Forsythe (Site Environmental Consultants) report on the above application, specifically, as I understand it, in relation to possible effects of the proposed subdivision on rural amenity values.

I can provide a few comments as requested, but this application and the associated 2GP submission have a reasonably long history and to do it justice I would probably need to spend more time than I have at the moment, and certainly complete a site visit. (As well, in an ideal world, the way Urban Design operates now is that any requests for our comments should be sent centrally to Urban Design).

Notwithstanding all of the above I have looked at the report and I consider that it does address reasonably well two of the issues apparent for this specific site – the importance of the historic Balmoral Farmhouse and preserving views towards it from the main road; and possible adverse effects on the setting of Outram township.

For the first I consider that the provisions recommended will enable the farmhouse to be seen from the road, which is a positive, and better than it being completely surrounded by new dwellings and unable to be seen. However, I have to say that for heritage type structures, more often than not it is the surrounding setting which is as important as the building itself. Some buildings only achieve their full value when they can be seen with sufficient space around them to fully display their merits. I haven't completed a site visit so I am unable to say whether or not this applies for Balmoral. (A good example for me of this effect is Cargill's castle which loses something of its heritage value as surrounding modern dwellings have increasingly diminished the more pristine and wild coastal setting so important for the building itself.)

For the Outram northern approach, the proposed roadside planting would certainly provide a visual softening which would have benefits for preserving some of the rural character surrounding the township, especially now that, as I understand it, a new subdivision between the subject site and Outram has been approved. Again, I take a slightly cautious tone and note that although this is a good mitigation measure, there is still an element of incremental urban spread which in my opinion goes against the desirability of ensuring a good separation between urban and rural character in these situations.

Let me know if you need more comprehensive comment than this.

Regards,

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