

Memorandum

TO: Amy Young, Planner.
Kathryn Ward, Principal Urban Designer.

FROM: Barry Knox, Consultant Landscape Architect.

DATE: 19th February 2020.

SUBJECT: **LUC-2019-623 6366 HYDE-MIDDLEMARCH ROAD,
MIDDLEMARCH. COMMENT FROM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.**

This memorandum is in response to the request for comment on an application to establish residential activity on a 13.5 ha site on the outskirts of Middlemarch. The area is zoned Rural and both the Operative District Plan and the Second Generation Plan (2GP) need to be considered. The site is undersized for residential density (required to be 15ha under the operative; 40ha under 2GP), and therefore the application is for a non-complying activity.

No detailed plans were submitted in the application, but the proposed dwelling is to be single storey, less than 10 metres in elevation. Access is proposed from local road Milford Street and not Swansea Street which is part of the state highway.

I visited the site on 17th February with Amy Young. Photographs taken at this time are included as Appendix 1. My comments principally relate to amenity values and character.

Brief Comment

Subsequent to the original application the applicant was asked for further information on assessment of relevant Objectives and Policies. I will not go into detail on the applicant's response, but in summary it is alleged that the application is consistent with Objectives and Policies for both the Operative and the 2GP Plans, except for the density provisions. (This has already been alluded to, and includes 2GP Policy 16.2.1.7).

The principal 2GP Objective relating to landscape assessment is 2.4.6: *Character of rural environment*. This requires the character and visual amenity of Dunedin's rural environment to be maintained or enhanced. (It is noted that the applicant has offered to provide a condition of consent requiring a landscape plan for the curtilage of the house to ensure the adverse effects on rural character and visual amenity will be less than minor.)

The subject site is typically of a rural character located at the northern outskirts of the Middlemarch township, where the predominant zoning is residential. The site is flat, grassed rural land bounded on the west and eastern sides by relatively low growing shelter belts, and visually relatively low key. There is also a "u-shaped" area on the periphery of the Middlemarch residential zone, to the east, south and western sides, which is zoned Rural Residential. The subject site area does not have a transitional Rural Residential zone, but links directly onto the Middlemarch Residential zone.

I note that the dwellings on the south side of Milford Street would be relatively close to the proposed dwelling over the road, and consideration for maintaining current rural focused views from these houses should be a consideration, if the application is approved.

From a wider visual perspective there would still be a reasonable separation between the clearly defined surrounding rural character, and the more urban character of the outskirts of Middlemarch. Traffic going along the Hyde-Middlemarch highway will be sufficiently distant from the proposed dwelling and there is an intervening shelterbelt to ensure that viewers from vehicles would not readily see the proposed dwelling. This would be particularly so if the view was to be softened with appropriate vegetation around the house and access way.

In my opinion, notwithstanding wider planning considerations such as activity status and cumulative effects of subsequent similar activities, the proposed dwelling will potentially have no more than a minor adverse effect on the local visual character and visual amenity. This

opinion is conditional on ensuring the dwelling, as maintained in the application, will be single storey and designed appropriately to integrate with the rural character as much as possible; and that the offered "landscape plan" is provided to ensure appropriate curtilage design for the same effect. (It was noted that a smaller existing dwelling on the south side of Milford Street near Swansea Street fits in well with the surrounding area because of its small scale, design and colours; and because of surrounding vegetation).

Barry Knox,
Consultant Landscape Architect

Appendix 1. Photographs Taken on 17th February 2020



Photo 1. This view is taken from Milford Street towards the north-west. The proposed dwelling would be approximately at the centre of the photograph. Swansea Street (the Hyde-Middlemarch highway) traverses along the western side of the subject site, in the middle distance of the photo. (Without appropriate visually "softening" treatment of the curtilage, a new dwelling here would initially stand out visually).



Photo 2. View from Milford Street south towards Middlemarch, close to where the access would be onto the subject site for the proposed dwelling. As noted, Milford Street is a 'local' road separating the subject site Rural zone from the Middlemarch Residential zone. Specific rural views from these dwellings need to be considered if the application proceeds.