



## Advice Note / Review

---

To	Rachel Cottam, Planner, Christchurch City Council
Copy	
From	Jeremy Head, Principal Landscape Architect
Office	Christchurch
Date	5 April 2022
File	3-C2401.00 33 and 69 School Road Landpower Peer review
Subject	Landscape and visual effects of amended Proposal.

---

This Advice Note follows the peer review (7 April 2021) of the landscape proposal prepared by DCM Urban (12 March 2021) for the Applicant. That peer review concluded that the Proposal failed to adequately meet the expectations in the District Plan for commercial development within the Rural Urban Fringe Zone where 'Moderate' to 'Low' adverse landscape and visual effects on the NZILA seven-point scale of effects<sup>1</sup> would potentially occur. 'Moderate' adverse effects are synonymous with effects that would be 'more than minor'. 'Low' adverse effects are synonymous with 'Minor' effects. In essence the levels of rural character currently present on site and legitimately expected to endure would be overwhelmed by commercial activity to a level where any semblance of rural amenity values would be lost.

Landscape issues included:

- A large obviously commercial, non-rural building would be located centrally on site with limited screening.
- The planting proposed was too spread out to effectively buffer or screen the large building from most views.
- The planted bund along School Road was not continuous allowing some residents' views into the site and to the Proposal.
- Farm implements on display and signage including flags would give rise to a site frontage along SH73 appearing clearly commercial.
- The building included an obtrusive backlit mural and various colours on its south side that would depart in appearance from a typical 'low-key' rural building and be eye-catching when passing by on SH73.
- An unacceptable level of cumulative effects would occur due to visually extending similar development opposite the site at 352 Hasketts Road (Norwood).

Thirteen submissions on the original Proposal supported by the DCM Urban landscape plan were received. Nine submissions were relative to landscape matters. Of the nine, three supported the Proposal, five opposed it and one was neutral. The five submissions in opposition included observations

---

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Te Tangi a te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, March 2022. Effects range from 'very low' - 'low' - 'moderate to low' - 'moderate to high' - 'high' - 'very high'.

that were also largely discussed and concluded in the 7 April 2021 peer review.

Several submissions were concerned with the visibility of the Proposal and the adverse effects this would have on rural amenity - a valid concern given the rural urban fringe zoning for the site. This included farm machinery moving about, possibly also utilising School Road for site access and the consequent reduction in rural amenity values appreciated along School Road following the Proposal generally.

Other submissions included loss of rural amenity values, loss of open pastoral views, excessive signage and precedent. Regarding precedent, the Norwood farm implement dealership at 352 Hasketts Road was perceived by some submitters and the peer reviewer as being partly relied upon by the Applicant's experts to 'devalue' the site context and suggest that similar development could therefore occur. Of note, open pastoral views are not protected in this zone.

Another submission concerned the 'blurring' of the transition between rural residential development and commercial activity as the Proposal is located north of SH73. There was a valid concern that SH73 would have less of a role as an obvious landscape 'change point'.

This Advice Note provides a brief comment on the revised landscape proposal prepared by James Bentley (Senior Principal Landscape Architect) and Gabe Ross (Principal Landscape Architect) from Boffa Miskell supporting the Applicant instead of DCM Urban (plans dated 3 March 2022 'Revision 2'). Both Messrs Bentley and Ross are registered landscape architects. Aspects of the revised building design (plans dated 17 March 2022), prepared by Shepherd and Rout are also discussed.

A meeting between Jeremy Head for Council, James Bentley and Gabe Ross was conducted at the Applicant's request to clarify the landscape issues at hand and to consider ways in which a more acceptable solution could be achieved while maintaining rural character and amenity on site and in the context of the site and allow for an acceptable Proposal. Discussions were held with the Applicant's architect regarding the warehouse aspect of the Proposal to explore options for a less-commercial appearance to the building.

Several iterations of a revised landscape plan and building design were provided by the Applicant for council feedback.

Following these discussions, changes to the Proposal eventually included:

- Low bunds between the building and SH73, which will provide a 'head-start' to some of the mitigation planting.
- A substantial increase in planting including trees, dense native shrub and ground cover planting along the site frontage with SH73, while providing some views through to the building and outdoor display area to contribute rural character and amenity.
- A continuous planted bund along the site boundary with School Road to largely screen the Proposal from view from School Road over time and contribute rural character and amenity.
- That the outdoor display area be limited to an area adjacent to the warehouse building frontage which avoids commercial elements and patterns dominating a larger part of the site as was originally proposed.
- That there will be no 'flag' advertising nor backlit mural on the south elevation of building facing SH73. The absence of these overtly commercial features will better address rural character and rural amenity values.

- Solid steel cladding finished in recessive colours which is proposed over the majority of the building, replacing some areas of translucent / backlit cladding originally proposed.

As per the above points, the Proposal will appear sufficiently 'different' to Norwood, particularly over time as the planting establishes where the two commercial operations will not be seen 'as one'.

It is concluded that the above changes will satisfactorily address the submitters' various concerns outlined above.

### Recommended Conditions

The following recommendations are made:

1. The landscape design is set out as per the Boffa Miskell drawings 3 March 2022 'Revision 2' (Figure 01 - 04).
2. The planting plan, details and specifications prepared by Boffa Miskell 3 March 2022 'Revision 2' (Figure 01 - 04) is implemented in the first planting season (April - September) following granting of building consent. If the landscape / planting plan is developed further following granting of resource consent, the drawings shall be provided to Council for approval.
3. The design of the warehouse building shall be consistent with the Shepherd and Rout drawings dated 17 March 2022.
4. The pylon sign shall be no higher than 5 m and 1.4 m in width overall.
5. The outdoor display of any products shall not extend beyond the area denoted as 'Display Area' on the Boffa Miskell Updated Landscape Plan - Figure 01.
6. That other than the advertising shown on the building and the pylon sign in the Shepherd and Rout elevations - Sheet RC03 there will be no other on-site advertising.
7. Any planting that fails to thrive, is removed, damaged or dies shall be replaced with the same species in the first growing season following the loss of the plant.

### Conclusion - Landscape and Visual Effects

The Applicant has gone some way to address the concerns raised by Council regarding the first iteration of the Proposal's adverse effects on rural character and amenity. The changes to the Proposal put forward will enable a more acceptable fit with the rural urban fringe setting than what was first applied for.

The Proposal now includes a satisfactory level of rural characteristics such as mixed vegetation type and open space which will assist with offsetting the commercial activities and features, particularly the large warehouse building. The planting will become more effective over time as it establishes and matures. The warehouse will be largely clad in recessive colours, and over time as the planting around it matures, it will better resemble a large farm shed from some viewpoints, nestled into a 'rural' planted setting.

It is concluded that there will still be a level of adverse landscape effects associated with the Proposal. However, these effects will be 'Low', reducing over time to 'Very Low' after the mitigation planting has established sufficiently to offset the addition of the warehouse building

and commercial activity on the site. Such effects are acceptable, given the site context and zoning, and that the Proposal will appear sufficiently 'different' from the highly commercial appearance of the farm machinery dealership opposite at Norwood. In this regard, cumulative effects will also reduce over time as the proposed planting establishes on the application site.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. E. Head." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "H".

Jeremy Head, Principal Landscape Architect  
NZILA (Registered)