

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF JAMES BENTLEY ON BEHALF OF
WELHOM DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED**

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

1. SUMMARY OF KEY CONCLUSIONS

- 1.1 My landscape visual assessment relates to the proposed Private Plan Change ("**Plan Change**") to rezone approximately 14.7ha of land in the northern fringe of the Masterton township ("**Site**"). An Outline Development Plan ("**ODP**") has been prepared which illustrates what the development of the Site could look like.
- 1.2 The Plan Change will facilitate a logical extension to the Cashmere Oaks Subdivision to the south which would adjust the rural / urban boundary to the north of the Site. The local area (including the Site) is identified as an area of potential change in the future as a result of urban growth in Masterton.¹ Due to both of these factors, the Plan Change would not entirely change the broader characteristics of the area, due to the area's state of transition.
- 1.3 The proposed residential development, including provision for a retirement village, will initially create **moderate**² adverse landscape effects during the construction phase as well as a change from rural to urban character. Over time, appropriate landscaping and planting will assist any development to integrate into its landscape setting.
- 1.4 Due to the location of the Site, and its reasonably limited visibility from nearby houses (including those off State Highway 2), adverse visual effects considered to be **low or very low**.³ The properties under construction within the Cashmere Oaks Subdivision that adjoin the southern boundary of the Site will gain views of the proposed land use change, although these, like the Plan Change, are part of the emerging pattern of development in this part of Masterton. The provision for a taller main building located within the centre of the Site will be up to 4m higher than the surrounding permitted building heights. Due to its distance from the surrounding houses, only the top part of the building will be visible (if at all) from most locations. Further, under the

¹ Refer to MUGS report.

² Refer to Landscape Assessment (Boffa Miskell 28 April 2022).

³ Visual effects based on a seven-point scale, from Very High (i.e. total loss of key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. amounts to a complete change of landscape character and in views), through to High, Moderate-High, Moderate, Low-Moderate, Low and Very Low.

present Rural zoning, there is allowance for non-residential buildings to extend up to 15m in height on the Site.

- 1.5 Any residential buildings located along the boundaries of the Site would be set back at the appropriate residential zoning distance (5 m from the front boundary and at least 3 m from other boundaries and 3 m for all boundaries when considering a retirement village) and would not exceed the 10 m height limit. Planting within that space is highly likely to occur (especially under the retirement village scenario).
- 1.6 The overall character of the combined buildings for both scenarios, either with retirement village or without, as experienced from the street, would be similar and predominantly suburban. The visual change resulting from development of the Site as a Residential Zone, with the inclusion of the recommended provisions for the interface of a retirement village with external boundaries, would be acceptable in this location.
- 1.7 Concerning private views, the visual effects assessment demonstrates that the Site is located within a reasonably discrete part of northern Masterton. Limited visibility from adjacent houses has been assessed, with their adverse visual effects considered to be **low or very low**.⁴ Landscaping and street trees will provide a level of residential amenity assisting to break up the built forms anticipated.
- 1.8 The Council's Landscape and Visual expert, Ms McArthur, generally agrees with the findings of my assessment. However, Ms McArthur recommends planting up all boundaries of the Site, whereas only the northern boundary of the Site is recommended to be planted. I disagree with this approach as it could lead to a greater disconnect between residential areas and provide a level of ongoing maintenance that may cause Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design issues.
- 1.9 I consider that the Plan Change, as proposed by Welhom, is appropriate in this location as it will fit into the existing landscape context of the area and is adjacent to similar types of development. The additional height allowance for a main building associated with a retirement village would not have any visual impacts over and above the main development, being either not visible at all or not prominent when viewed from any point beyond the Site.

James Bentley
8 March 2023

⁴ See Appendix 1: Landscape Methodology of the Landscape Assessment for Private Plan Change Request to the combined Wairarapa District Plan for the seven-point scale on which landscape and visual effects are determined.