

Summary – Jane Rennie Urban Designer

Background / Experience

1. My name is Jane Maree Rennie. I hold the position of Principal and Senior Urban Designer with the environmental consultancy firm Boffa Miskell Limited, based in the firm's Christchurch office.
2. My qualifications and experience are set out in my evidence in chief. This notes that I am both a qualified urban designer and planner.
3. I have recently been involved in the Christchurch Replacement District Plan hearings in relation to the Residential Medium Density Zone on behalf of Housing New Zealand.

Kreft Submission

4. The Wanaka Trust and the Estate of Norma Kreft through their submission seek to support the identification of the MDR over both properties.
5. I support the contiguous zoning of the Warren and Stratford Street Properties to MDR. Both properties are within walking distance of the Wanaka Town Centre and other amenities and services. The eastern end of Warren Street already includes a number of different housing typologies and the intensity of development anticipated by the MDR Zone is capable of being absorbed in this area.
6. They also seek through their submission to ensure that the Replacement District Plan enables the effective delivery of a range of medium density housing typologies what are well-designed within the MDR Zone. Accordingly, they request through their submissions a design-led approach and to make development generally more permissible with respect to appropriate breaches of prescribed standards.
7. 'Design-led' refers to achieving site-specific built form outcomes that can then be tested against a rule framework, not the other way around, where the rule package defines the outcome. Rules that are too rigid will not encourage good design or encourage growth.

MDR Zone Objectives and Policies

8. The relevant MDR Zone objectives and policies establish a very clear policy framework in favour of quality urban design outcomes that respond to site characteristics, context and amenity.
9. The MDR Zone policy framework does **not** in my opinion support the non-complying status outlined for many of the prescribed bulk and location rules. This highlights a major disconnect between the policy and rule frameworks. In my opinion, the focus is on 'managing' effects, not in 'avoiding' or 'preventing' them, which is associated with non-complying status.
10. I consider that RDA status will better achieve the proposed policy outcomes providing for medium density housing in central locations. Those policy outcomes are intended to address higher order housing supply, choice and affordability issues.

Restricted Discretionary Activity Status

11. I consider that Restricted Discretionary Activity ("**RDA**") status is appropriate in relation to consideration of the built form standards relating to density, height, building coverage, recession planes, boundary setbacks and landscape permeable surfaces.
12. I believe that RDA is an appropriate test for consideration of the benefits of a design regarding any given breach of a standard. An RDA process will facilitate more flexibility and encourage the development of a range of new medium density housing typologies that achieve good design outcomes, over mediocre design that complies within the standards.
13. An RDA process provides specific direction for all users (Applicants and the Consent Authority) as to what matters are to be considered. An RDA regime still allows the Council to refuse inappropriate development on a case-by-case basis. RDA status for bulk and location rules is adopted in a number of other District Plans and I am

confident that refinement of the assessment matters outlined in the original submission will promote quality design outcomes.

14. Full Discretionary status provides little direction and a level of uncertainty as to what will be considered. Non-complying status can be a barrier to achieving good design outcomes, by discouraging people from embarking on a consent process that is more complex, timely and expensive. Limiting discretion and outlining relevant assessment matters, provides a robust framework for Council to assess each application/site on its merits.
15. Non-complying status signals to plan users that any such breach will be subject to a greater degree of scrutiny and indicates to the community that such activities are unlikely to be appropriate and are not readily anticipated. This position is unreasonable and will not encourage new and innovative ways to develop medium density housing within the MDR Zone. In addition, it will undermine the ability for the Council to achieve its overarching policies and objectives in relation to housing supply, choice and affordability contained within Chapters 3 and 4 of the PDP.
16. There are several examples across the country where a RDA regime has been established within medium density environments, including Christchurch and Auckland. An RDA process will create greater certainty and transparency around issues to be considered if a rule breach occurs, and promote a design-led approach to providing new, quality, innovate housing typologies outcomes in the District.

Site Coverage

17. In relation to site coverage, the submission sought the retention of the rights in the ODP for the Warren Street Property as obtained through consent order in respect of Plan Change 10¹ allowing a 5% larger site coverage rule than in the notified MDR Chapter.
18. The removal of the 50% coverage has not been addressed in the Council's s42A report and no justification given for its removal.

¹ Consent Order; *Kreft v Queenstown Lakes District Council* (ENV-2007-CHC-317) dated 29 July 2009

19. This coverage is not inconsistent with a medium density housing scenario, a number of the neighbouring sites on Warren Street (see Photo of 25-29 Warren Street), and no added adverse effects are anticipated. This 5% would be largely indiscernible. Therefore, I believe that the existing provisions of the consent order should be retained.

Response to Ms Leith's Summary of Evidence

20. I note that Ms Leith in her summary of evidence outlines that the use of assessment matters is not currently used, with the approach instead being to include both broad and fine grained policy to guide outcomes, and that activity status should be retained as non-complying.
21. I agree that the policy framework varies from broad to fine grained. However, this means that more detailed guidance is provided in relation to some standards and not others. For example, in terms of height, clear guidance on breaches of the height rule is **not** well articulated. However, more detail exists in relation to 'urban design solutions'. But in fact there are no specific bulk and location standards supported by an activity status, which would convey a message around flexibility for key design parameters. In contrast, the objectives and policies seek to be adopting a wider approach to urban design solutions to positively respond to site and wider context. In a nut shell, the rules fail to create flexibility for this to this happen.
22. In my relief sought (Appendix 2 of my evidence in chief), I set out a clear set of matters that discretion could be limited to. In addition, I set out a series of assessment matters for each standard that 'could' be incorporated to assist with the interpretation of the matters. I note that this is an approach applied in other Plans. The suggested relief sought to provide a greater level of consistency within the rule package, given how the current matters of discretion are worded.
23. I note that detailed consideration has been given to the need for assessment matters as part of the review of Chapter 27 of the Plan on Subdivision and Development. Issues around conflating matters of discretion with assessment matters was discussed in legal submissions (Mr Goldsmith page 16 of Mr Bryce's Right of Reply). I believe this to also be the case within the MDR Zone. As a result, the

subdivision reporting officer Mr Bryce has made a number of significant amendments to the RDA framework to ensure that matters of control and discretion are appropriately narrowed to promote good resource management. This includes a new suite of assessment matters in providing more effective guidance and greater certainty to plan users.

24. If, however the Council do not wish to include assessment matters within the MDR Zone Chapter, this does not impact on the workability of a RDA regime for the built form standards. Either way, this should not determine the activity status of different activities/standards, this is a separate issue.

Jane Rennie

27 October 2016