

Before the Independent Commissioners appointed by the Waimakariri District Council

In the matter of Proposed Waimakariri District Plan: Ohoka Rezonings (Hearing Stream 12D)

and

In the matter of Further submission by the Oxford Ohoka Community Board [further submitter 62] to the Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited [submitter 160] and Carter Group Property Ltd [submitter 237] submission to Rezone land at Ohoka

Statement of Sarah Kaye Barkle (Chairperson) on behalf of Oxford-Ōhoka Community Board

Dated: 20 June 2024

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Statement of Sarah Barkle on behalf of the Oxford-Ōhoka Community Board.

Introduction

1. My full name is Sarah Kaye Elizabeth Barkle.
2. I am the current Chairperson of the Oxford-Ōhoka Community Board (**Board**).
3. I have lived in the Waimakariri District for over 40 years. I grew up in North Canterbury, and now reside with my family in Swannanoa. This is my second term on the Board, so I have connections with residents across the ward.
4. I have a degree in Geology from Canterbury University and had a particular interest in water and hazard management. Relevant groups I have previously been and are currently involved with are: Ōhoka/Mandeville Rural Drainage Advisory Group, Water Race Advisory Group, Cycle and Walkway Network Driving Group, Waimakariri Integrated Transport Strategy driving group.
5. The Board's submission covered the following:
 - Drainage, stormwater and flooding;
 - Water supply;
 - The proposal to deal with wastewater;
 - The power grid;
 - The local roads and transport generally;
 - The amenity and 'feel' of -Ōhoka;
 - Impacts on local schools;
 - Potential reverse sensitivity effects on rural community members;
 - The consistent and supported views of the local community as expressed in existing planning documents;
 - Impacts on Ōhoka heritage;
 - Potential to upset ecological restoration works.
6. My predecessor as Board Chairperson, Thomas Robson, also presented a statement at the hearing of the precursor to this rezoning proposal: Private Plan Change 31. In that evidence (attached as **Appendix 1**) Thomas also commented on:
 - The overwhelming level of Community opposition to the proposed change;
 - The Boards engagement with the Community to obtain its views and concerns;

- The extent of previous consideration of more intense development at Ōhoka, and its uniform rejection;
 - The Community desire that the rural nature and character, which are a major attraction of the Village, be protected and maintained;
 - The fact that change is not opposed outright but rather change that erodes the Village feel and character of Ōhoka;
 - The significant impact of the proposal on the rural roading network due in particular to the lack of public transport or safe and accessible cycleways, road capacity constraints, and likelihood of increased congestion;
 - The negative impact on community cohesion and connectivity caused by the proposed changes to the nature of the Village, when development ought to be seamless and integrated with the character of Ōhoka;
 - The view that the area is not designed to cope with the large sudden increase in population that will result in the loss of the rural aesthetic; and
 - The costs to the Community to improve the infrastructure servicing the proposal, including major road works required to ensure Community safety.
7. The Community issues raised by Thomas remain 'live' in relation to the proposed rezoning.

Summary of Evidence

8. In terms of technical information and expert advice, we have lodged expert evidence in the areas of Landscape, Urban Design, Transport, Stormwater servicing and Planning in support of our further submission in opposition to the proposed rezoning.
9. The following is our elaboration on a selection of points that we feel are important from the local residents' perspective, including those who have significant hands-on, real-life expertise and an extensive knowledge of their area.

Drainage, Stormwater and Flooding:

10. The first point relates to the hazard maps supplied by the applicant, which I have attached in **Appendix 2** and **3**. You will see they contain two road boundaries, Tram Rd and No10 Rd, in a triangular shape that I have highlighted in green.
11. Appendix 2 features an area with no overlay, indicating the submitters view that there are no hazards or concerns for the development of this land. Meanwhile Appendix 3 shows no flooding hazards indicated for a 1:200 return period flood. In contrast I ask

that you take a look at the photos in the attached **Appendix 4**. These show that the lived reality is much different.

12. These are photos taken following the July 2022 flood event. This area is affected by a resurgence path. Where water that is usually flowing underground comes to the surface and flows above the ground. This is not uncommon in the Swannanoa, Mandeville and Ōhoka areas. Unfortunately for this area, it is an annual event; the land is flooded yearly. Yet the maps indicate no problem at all?
13. Locals have long warned that this area is unsuitable for development. However, they were told the modelling said otherwise. Ground water flows and resurgence channels are a highly complex system in this area with many variables affecting them. Modelling does not appear to consider these, so how can the experts accurately represent what happens on this land and its downstream effects?
14. Rate payers ultimately inherit the problem caused by unwise subdivision. Just like the situation we have here with RIDL and their proposed subdivision, the developer in Mandeville too believed there would be no flooding issues. The rate payers are now facing a bill upwards of 20 million dollars just to try and alleviate some of the flooding they experience. Locals knew this would be the case, the experts thought they knew better. Now who bares this burden?
15. We would encourage you to look at the submissions lodged by the locals through plan change 31, look at the consistencies in their accounts, they are striking, and they ought to be given some weight in this decision-making process.
16. Ōhoka is well known as a wet, damp and boggy location, it always has been. The evidence confirms¹ that the groundwater is often near surface level and the soil structure does not allow for a great deal of permeability or drawing down of water. Instead, you get a combination of a high level of surface impermeability, soils that are saturated and a ground water system driven by upstream flows which increase the water table to points where it comes to the surface.
17. In essence, the ground is getting watered from above and below. The localized undercurrent and resurgence systems, the impermeable soils as well as increased duration and intensity of rainfalls are all essential factors that need to be involved in accurate hazard modelling of this area. The Community has concerns that the modelling systems do not accurately portray these complexities, which once again stresses the importance of taking local knowledge into account.

¹ For example, in Mr Mthamo's evidence.

18. Locals have observed the flow rate of the Ohoka stream has changed over the years, they note that it used to take more rain for the stream to flood, now it only takes a moderate/heavy rainfall. They say, the flow increases more rapidly and when it comes down it is moving a lot faster. In their opinion, there is no capacity for this stream to take anymore. It won't necessarily be the people living within the development that will wear the effects of this but the residents who live below, including Silverstream.
19. During the Plan change 31 hearing, Mr Mcleods evidence on the flooding events in 2023 is understood to have been based on his observations from a drive around. He seemed to place a significant amount of blame for the flooding on the lack of drain and swale maintenance. Whilst there is likely to be some degree of localized spill over due to this, to say that this is the culprit of most of the flooding seen in Ōhoka is perplexing.
20. If these flooding events were simply because of lack of maintenance from private property owners in Ōhoka, then that would presumably have been a simple fix, but flooding persists. It is also interesting to note that in one of the locations that suffers from frequent flooding (Wilsons Drive), the developer had installed a swale system very similar to that which is proposed under the rezoning. That system has consistently been seen to fail over the years, contributing to flooding. The rate payers now face the burden of cost to upgrade this.

The Local Roads and Transport

21. The reality of the proposed rezoning is that represents urban sprawl. It is a development that is disassociated and disconnected to the local area. You can try and twist the reality, sugar coat the obvious or put on the rose-tinted glasses but the fact remains that this proposal does not meet the objective of creating a well-functioning urban environment or even, in our view, contributing to one. That is largely because most interactions and connections that households need to make will be outside of this environment and will require vehicle movements to get there.
22. As a member of the cycle and walking network driving team, I have some knowledge of the extent of the networks that have been proposed and the reality of their implementation. A district wide cycle and walking network strategy was established and consulted on in 2022. I am a firm believer in connected peri-rural environments through these means. However, the reality is the cost to do so is extremely high and the existing roads are not necessarily capable of supporting such connections in their current states.
23. For the cycle and walking network plan to be realized will take a huge amount of investment including ratepayer funding and partnership with Waka Kotahi. This seems out of reach for now. I note that the applicant has presented the active transport

network as a sweetener to the proposed rezoning by saying that they would provide cycleways that otherwise would not happen. Whether that is the case depends on whether the intention is to provide cycleways within or beyond the proposals' footprint, behind or outside the hedge? If it is primarily internal, I wonder what benefit this gives the community as a whole?

24. The same applies to the latest suggestion of privately funding some public transport, for a time. It is difficult to assess whether this would really assist in reducing car movements as details remain light. But it might be assumed that its survival would depend on patronage, and if a lack of patronage leads to the 'service' being discontinued, what happens then?
25. Not a lot of attention has been given to the option of having a retirement village situated within the development. The isolation that these residence would face would be their reality. And why would they be isolated? because they would need to rely on vehicular transport to get anywhere or for anyone to visit them. The proposed public transport to Kaiapoi would not necessarily be of any use, what if they needed to get to Rangiora or Christchurch or had family coming from there? Are we expecting our elderly to take multiple bus services to get to the places they need to access? This point alone surely highlights a non-functioning town.
26. The roads and intersections surrounding this proposed development are narrow, high speed country roads. They work ok servicing the population of a rural community. They most certainly would not serve well for elderly commuters wanting to pop down to the shops, which they would have to travel to do. These roads and intersections coupled with the regular users and elderly drivers then become a recipe for disaster. So, what then? Reduce the speeds on these roads so that this area is then further isolated by time and distance? Investment into road 'improvements' courtesy of the rate payers?

The Amenity and 'Feel' of Ōhoka

27. The submitters evidence makes numerous mentions of their view that the proposed rezoning will not have a great deal of impact on the rural character of Ōhoka. The Board absolutely disagrees, based on the simple fact that an additional 850 households will elevate the population significantly and it will have a significant impact on the feel of Ōhoka. The token mitigating factor of a hedge around the subdivision is not going to hide or reduce the extra hustle and bustle that will be generated by the addition of significantly more people into the area.
28. In fact, the proposed hedge only creates a divide of those who live within the hedge and those who live outside.

29. The Proposed District Plan seeks to maintain the character of the districts settlements, including Ōhoka. The proposed rezoning will have the opposite effect. Ōhoka, as we know it, will be swallowed up and lose its Village feel.
30. The suggestion that a polo ground would anchor the rural nature of this newly urbanised area seems a particularly odd concept. The proposed development is for an urban environment (hence the reliance on the NPS-UD). The people who would be moving into this area would reside in urban, residential sized sections. The attraction to them of a polo ground is difficult to see. Arguably, a better location for such a facility would be at the Mandeville Sports Centre – an already existing hub of a wide variety of sporting clubs located down the road at Mandeville.
31. In addition, schools offer a special connection to a community and reflect the character of an area. If a second school was to be created behind the hedge in 'Ōhoka Estate' The Board's view is that it would create a further divide within the community. There would be those who lived behind the hedge and those who lived on the other side. It is difficult to see how this situation would promote any kind of whole community connectivity.
32. Simply put, you can't hide away an addition of 850 households condensed into one area, without it changing the feel and character of the current village.
33. Such an addition has a presence, it creates an atmosphere, and it has a significant impact.

The consistent and supported views of the local community as expressed in existing planning documents

34. The applicants' case has mentioned that people should have a choice to buy an urban section in Ōhoka but equally people should also have a choice to buy within a rural settlement or lifestyle block area. Developing Ōhoka into an urban environment whether it retains apparent rural character or not, is taking this option away from people and not in keeping with the policy direction under the Proposed District Plan.
35. If this area was developed as proposed, it would force people to look further out into greenfield spaces to fulfil their preferred place again. Ōhoka has been earmarked as rural lifestyle zone for a reason. Urban development belongs alongside existing urban areas so that these lifestyle zones are not pushed further afield.
36. The need for future housing and the types of housing being pushed by the applicant seems to be based on the want of the current average middle-aged demographic. The applicant does not appear to have considered the thoughts of our youth – our future house occupiers.

37. Urban design should not just follow the same pattern as it always has. It needs to change so that our centers are the well-functioning urban environments that the NPS-UD intends them to be.
38. This concept also requires a mind shift for developers and it needs to be supported by them. Areas like Ōhoka need to remain an option for those who want a lifestyle block, while urban development ought to remain as close to current centers as possible, include infilling.
39. I have been involved in several working groups looking at future development. These have involved conversations with youth about their expectations on transport and urban growth should look like. Home affordability and environmental factors are top of mind for these generations. They are welcoming of the concepts of living within a higher density urban center, close to amenities, less need for private car ownership. The reality is a shift in thinking may not come from the current middle-aged population and we should not discount the thoughts of our youth.

Conclusion

40. If you are to take anything away from the Board's further submission in opposition to the rezoning proposal, please remember to listen not only to the views of the experts present, but also to locals' accounts. Those accounts are the reality, not desk top modelling. Unfortunately, most of these local accounts are not being heard in this district plan process as they had thought they had their say with the plan change process. Your average person is not ofay with the systems in which a developer can use to get their projects across the line and feel a little blindsided with this process.
41. We ask that you look at the locals accounts through their plan change 31 submissions to get a feel for the overwhelming response this development has had and the consistent concerns it raises,
42. We ask that the decision considers the future needs of urban development rather than repeating the same patterns. As the NPS-UD requires, it is time developers to stop taking the easy option of greenfield development and start thinking about the future, becoming the drivers of change, and in the process providing well-functioning urban environments.
43. That should not require the loss of settlements like Ōhoka Village and the character that they add to the district and for the Community that lives there or might want to live there. This is a unique village that is an asset to our district, provides the market with lifestyle options and is worth protecting.

44. Thank you for considering our further submission.

Dated: 12 June 2024

Sarah Barkle

Chairperson of the Oxford- Ōhoka Community Board

Appendix 1:

Statement on PC31 by Thomas Robson (then Chairperson of the Board)

My name is Thomas Robson I am Deputy Chairperson of the Oxford- Ohoka Community Board, and have been an elected member of the Board since 2016. I have lived in the Waimakariri District all my life. I grew up on a rural property and now live in the Oxford township. I have a deep appreciation of the unique rural country environment that we live in, and I enjoy the unspoilt aspects of the area that so many of us enjoy and which attracts many people to our District.

We are not here however to represent our own views but rather the views of the Community and their Community Board.

The Communities response to this proposal has been overwhelming in its opposition. Board members have been contacted numerous times by concerned members of the public, some of whom have been disillusioned by the complexity of the submission procedures and the sheer quantity of evidence that has come in in such a short time. At the time this plan change was announced a number of board members attended a public meeting held at the Ohoka hall where there was a large turn out in opposition to this proposal. After that meeting the Community Board decided to advocate for them in opposition to this proposal. Since then, we have had multiple phone calls and visits regarding this proposal, with many of the community afraid of the potential impacts on their lives and environment. The Board has engaged with other community groups to seek their opinion and their opposition has been universal.

While the Board has submitted against this proposal in terms of the effects regarding drainage, storm water and flooding, water supplies, the high cost and issues of the proposed waste water system, local roading impacts and the loss of the rural character of the area, the impact on the local power grid, local schools and the potential for reverse sensitivity effects, time restraints mean that we are today presenting our opposition in just a couple of these areas.

Firstly, we want to highlight the fact that development in this area has already been considered by the Community as part of the District Plan, during the Rural Residential Strategy Consultation that was extensive and highlighted the overwhelming desire for the rural nature of the area to be protected. The existing rural character of the area and the large lot sizes were highlighted as the reason many had moved to the area and were seen as central to the desirability of the location. Ohoka is not the area for this level of intensive development, which would be far better suited on the out skirts of an urban setting with more appropriate facilities and services. We also agree with conclusions made by Richard John Knott in relation to urban design that the plan change proposes a new urban development which does not support the existing rural village character of Ohoka, on land which is not identified for such development and is out of step with the expectations of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS). We also agree that it is not a natural extension to Ohoka; it essentially is

a new town within the rural area that no way reflects the low density living that Policy 18.1.1.9 intends.

The residents of Ohoka have chosen to reside in a rural village and have no opposition to sharing it and or even expanding it. What they are opposed to is the erosion of the village feel and the loss of the very character that enticed them to Ohoka in the first place. Residents believe that any development should be complimentary to the area and create community bonds, strength and resilience rather than opposition and disunity. There is a real danger that this development would be seen as a stand alone town rather than integrating into the Ohoka village in a meaningful way. This is the very reason why policy 18.1.1.9 exists, to ensure the growth and development in the Ohoka area maintains the rural village character, and encourages connectivity.

Secondly this proposal would have a significant impact on the rural roading network. Due to the lack of public transport in the area this development would rely on the existing roading network for residents to get to and from work and school. The roads in the area are currently nearing capacity and not designed for the amount of traffic that this development would create. There are sites that are currently very congested such as the Tram Rd to Motorway on ramp where there have been several serious accidents, and where there are often delays. To alleviate this the applicant has proposed an additional lane be added to the on ramp which would be extremely costly and would be an additional burden to the tax payer. We also agree with the evidence provided by Andrew Metherell when he says that -

60. I also remain concerned that there is a high reliance on Tram Road generally for access. The step change of a 26% increase in traffic volume on an already very high 8,000vpd for a rural arterial is likely to substantially increase crash frequency on that road. It could influence the level of improvement already being considered by Council. The volumes also generate higher delays and consequential safety risk for all downstream intersections. Given the high speed nature of the road, crashes often result in high severity casualties. With some of its characteristics with the likes of risk of sun strike, I consider there will likely be a notable change in safety risk. I consider that needs to be investigated further.

We also agree with Andrew Metherells conclusions regarding public transport when he states that-*Access is unlikely to be feasible for the PC31 site.*

In 2022 the Waimakariri District Council prepared a walking and cycling strategy for the District which included some unsealed cycle paths in this area designed to ensure safe cycling for local residents however these are not currently funded and are not currently planned to be built in the foreseeable future, The applicant is proposing to build some sections of cycleways but these do not seem to connect to any of the main cycling routes into Christchurch or Rangiora and would need significant Council investment to provide connectivity and safe cycling to any significant destinations.

In conclusion the Oxford Ohoka Community Board strongly opposes the proposed plan change. We represent the local community who have chosen to live in a rural, village setting quite unlike the proposed development. The Community have been consulted through out the District Plan Consultation process and have clearly stated that they wish development in the area to be in keeping with the existing rural character. To change the nature of the village

would be to undermine community adhesion and connectivity. Any development in the area should be seamless, in keeping with the current District plan, and would then integrate well with the existing village. Ohoka continues to grow and evolve but in a natural and cohesive manner that is welcomed by the community.

The area is simply not designed to cope with a large, sudden increase in population and the resulting loss of rural aesthetic. The local roading network is already operating at a very high volume and major works resulting in high costs to the community would be needed to improve infrastructure to the point that it would be safe for such an increase in traffic. The Board suggests that infrastructure upgrades in all areas would be needed before any significant increase in population were to occur to reduce the risk to local commuters and residents.

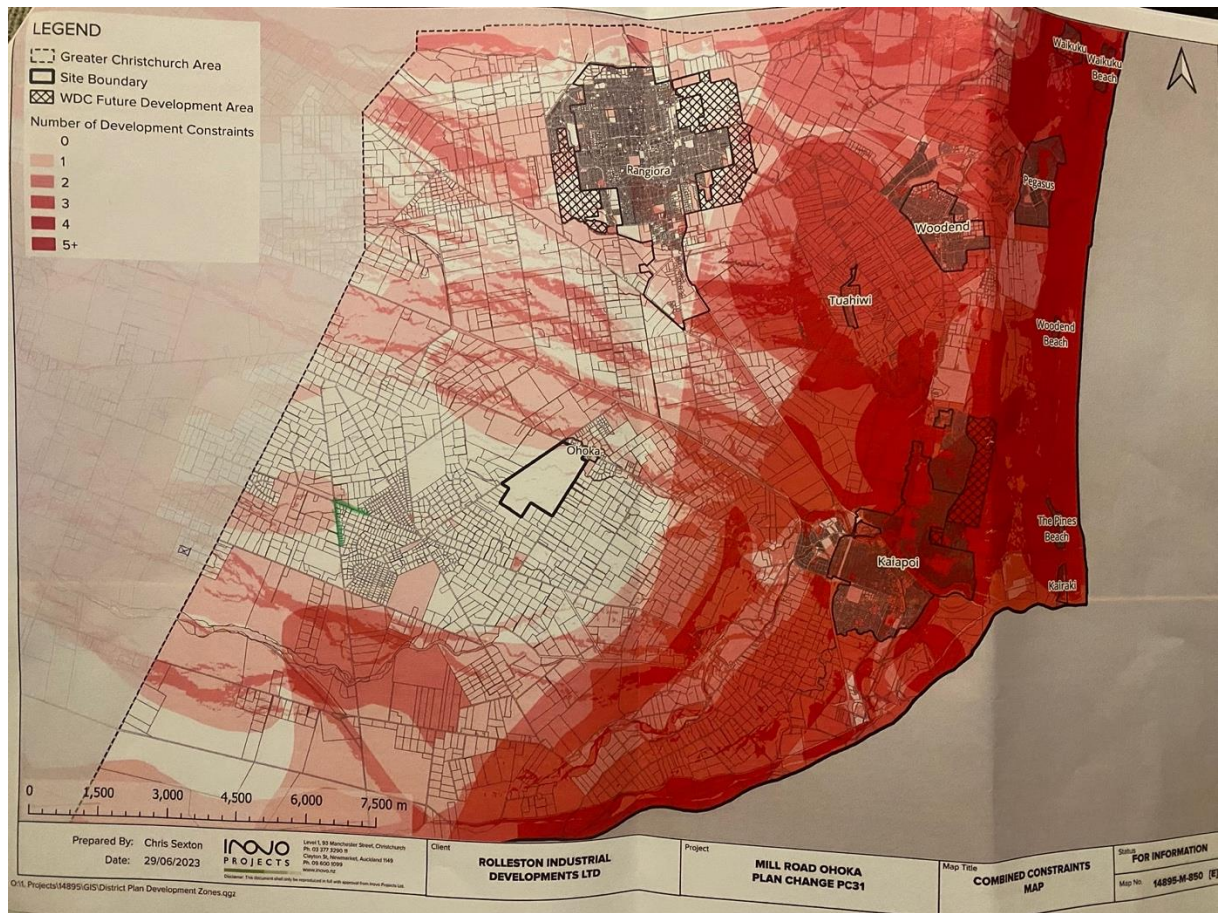
The Board would also like to point out how difficult, time consuming and stressful this proposal has been for local residents. It is difficult to understand why anyone would propose changing a district plan when the Community is so adamantly opposed to such a change. We would suggest that developers consider their community, and their neighbours wishes before they try to change what is essentially a document representing the Communities views.

Thank you for the opportunity to express these views and I hope that the Commissioners and Developers have heard the Communities concerns.

Thomas Robson

Appendix 2:

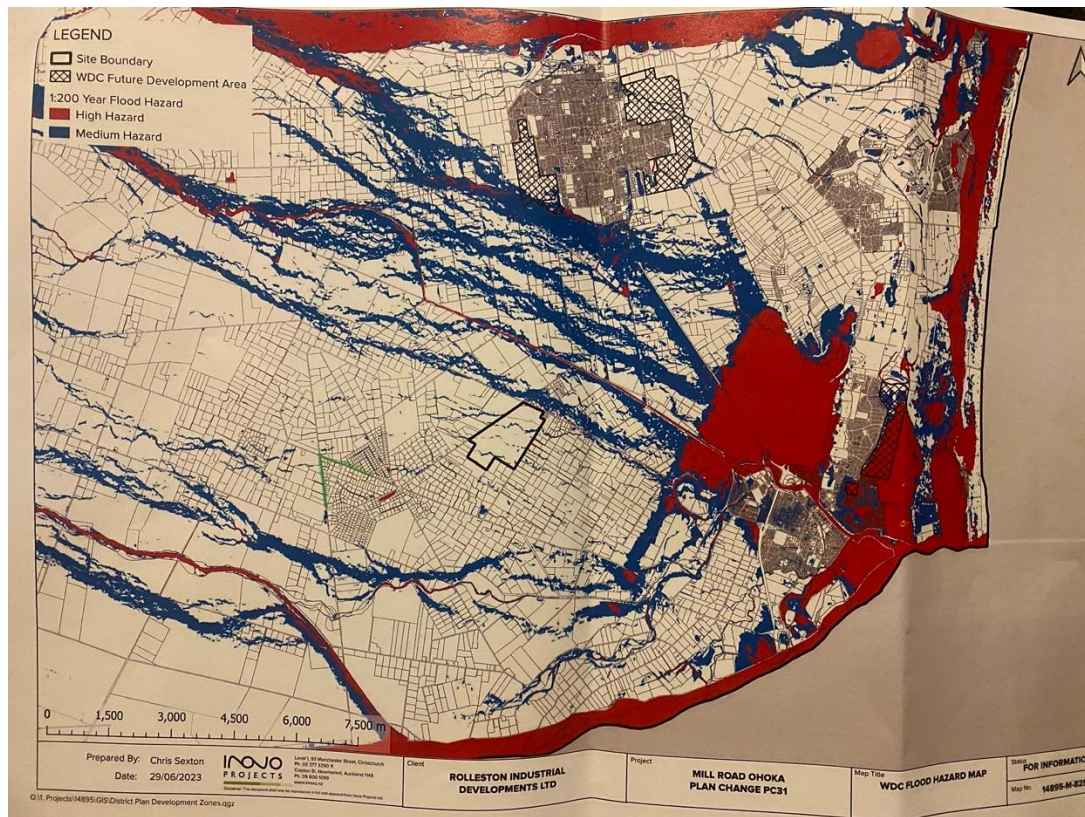
Map of Development Constraints.



This map indicates that there are no development constraints for the development east of the green lines.

Appendix 3:

Map of 1:200 year Flood Hazards



This map indicates that there is no level of flooding expected in this area (east of the green line) in a 1:200 return period flood, which is quite an extreme event. The blue line is the area of the proposed development.

Appendix 4:

A series of photos from the 2022 flooding event around the Mandeville area (east of the green line indicated on the map in appendix 2 and 3), where residence have been effected by the flooding.













