

Before the Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel

IN THE MATTER OF The Resource Management Act 1991 and the Local
Government (Auckland Transitional Provisions) Act
2010

AND

IN THE MATTER OF Of Topic 016/017 RUB and Topic 081 – Rezoning and
Precincts (Geographical Areas)

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF DENNIS JOHN SCOTT
ON BEHALF OF CDL LAND NEW ZEALAND LIMITED (3159 AND FS 438, 3092
AND 3212)**

DATED 17 November 2015

Introduction

1. My name is Dennis John Scott.
2. I am a landscape architect and resource management consultant specialising in landscape assessment, land use management, planning and design in urban, rural and coastal environments.
3. This statement of evidence is given in support of CDL Land NZ Limited (3159 and FS 438, 3092 and 3212) ("**CDL**") in support of its Submissions 3159/27 and 28 in relation to the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan ("**PAUP**") Topic 016/017 – RUB and Topic 081 - Rezoning and Precincts (Geographical Areas). In particular, this evidence relates to an extension of the RUB to include CDL's land at 7-11 Christian Road, Swanson being legally described as PT ALLOT 124 Parish of Waipareira ("**the Site**") and the operative zoning and precinct provisions to be applied to the Site.
4. I hold the qualifications of a Diploma in Urban Valuation (1969) and a postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture (1974). I am a Registered Landscape Architect and Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects. I am a past – President (2009-2011) of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA). I am a signatory to the Ministry for the Environment Urban Design Protocol. My career as a landscape architect dates back to 1974 when I began working in the public sector on a range of landscape planning and resource management projects. From 1987-2010 I was the director and principle consultant of D J Scott Associates Limited, implementing projects for both private and public sector clients. I am now an independent consultant landscape architect.
5. Relevant specific landscape planning and resource management projects over my career of 42 years are set out in **Attachment A** to this evidence.
6. I confirm that I have read the code of conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Consolidated Practice Note (2014) and I agree to comply with it. In that regard, I confirm that this evidence is written within my area of expertise, except where otherwise stated, and that I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.
7. I have been engaged by CDL since 2006 and assisted with site planning in respect of and evidence on the Environment Court section 293 RMA Applications to Variation 88 (Swanson Structure Plan). In addition, I provided site planning advice and prepared and presented Evidence to the Waitakere City Council in 2010 on the Plan Change 35 matter in relation to the CDL land. I have been retained to provide this brief of evidence on behalf of CDL on the PAUP Topic 016/017 RUB matter

Scope of evidence

8. My evidence will address the following topics:

- (a) Context
- (b) Consolidation of Swanson Village
- (c) The CDL Proposal
- (d) Conclusion

9. My conclusions are as follows:

- I. Swanson Village is located at the western extremity of the true Auckland metropolitan urban area.
- II. In my opinion, the identity of the 'Swanson Village' entity is of a compact form.
- III. The identity of this area and the associated Urban Village context includes the enclosing foothills, the golf course land, the village, the existing urban form and now the developing Penihana North property.
- IV. The CDL property can be seen as forming a peripheral part of the neighbouring urban activities to the west and north rather than simply being seen as a separate and exclusively rural area.
- V. The Site is a short walking distance from both the commercial centre and the railway station and is bordered by the railway (across Tram Valley Road) for much of its northern and western boundaries.
- VI. The site has only a gentle upward slope to the south and contains very little vegetation apart from grass.
- VII. The Site is now more connected to the urban Penihana land to the east than it is to the rural land to the south.
- VIII. Moreover, the Site is now the direct nexus of the urban transitional landscape.
- IX. The decision to urbanise Penihana North is benign, as is the same opportunity for the CDL land - the Site.
- X. Both the Penihana North Land and the CDL Land lie within the 500m - 5 minute walking distance of the railway station (**Attachments 2 – 4 inclusive**)

- XI. In my opinion, the Swanson Urban Village and its associated contextual landscape (of which I consider the Site forms a part) is fundamentally urban in nature and character, even though the Site itself is not currently developed..
- XII. Existing pedestrian infrastructure is located at the boundary of the CDL land on the northern side of the Christian Road and Tramway Road intersection. (**Attachment 8**)
- XIII. From a spatial perspective, the village as a distinctive and identifiable urban form is now emerging as a physical reality in the landscape. The recent Penihana North development construction work is a fundamental example of this extended and yet contained urban village transition and form.
- XIV. One of the more explicit transformations of this area, other than the sheer scale of the impending housing settlement change, is the landscape character change that is experienced on entering Christian Road and the 'foothills' environment.
- XV. The CDL land has, as a consequence, become contained, in a visual and experiential sense, at least from Christian Road, by urban settlement and development.
- XVI. I consider that the physical works that have been carried out on the Penihana land are a significant physical change in comparison with circumstances that existed during the Variation 88 Swanson Structure Plan decision-making process.
- XVII. In my opinion, provided urban development on the Site is undertaken in a manner that is consistent with and complementary to the treatment of the interface between the urban and rural areas on the Penihana land, it can reinforce both the integrity and character of urban development around the Swanson Village and the creation of a permanent, defensible boundary between the urban and rural areas on the south side of Swanson.
- XVIII. The Penihana development suggests that topography, planting and the placement of large lots along the southern boundary of the urban area can create a strong and defensible boundary.
- XIX. The southern boundary of the Site generally aligns with the southern boundary of the Penihana land and it is appropriate to continue that alignment as the interface between the rural and urban areas.
- XX. It is feasible (and it is proposed by CDL) to manage the southern boundary of the Site in a way that discourages taller buildings that would intrude into the landscape and that ensures provision of planting that defines the interface between the rural and urban areas.
- XXI. The provision of residential of element on both sides of Christian Road on the site and the Penihana land will create an impression that the two developments are complementary

and integrated. They both use the same roading links to the village and can (and will) use a similar gradation in lot sizes as development moves up the slope to the south.

XXII. In my opinion the CDL land is a critical future element (Site) and can contribute significantly to the emerging Swanson Village urban landscape character.

XXIII. The CDL land now sits as an obvious localised extension to the RUB.

Context

10. Swanson Village is located at the western extremity of the true Auckland metropolitan urban area. By that I mean that the village comprises a relatively narrow piece of development that is at the western rural boundary of the city's primary metropolitan urban area. The Swanson Village proper is the also the gateway to the western Waiheke foothills and ranges environment. Swanson Village is also located on the confluence of the District Arterial roading pattern and double-tracked electrified rail route **Attachment 1**.
11. In my opinion, the identity of the 'Swanson Village' entity is of a compact form. This notion is captured on **Attachment 2**, and includes that area west of Candia Road and extends into the western foothill environment surrounding and enclosing the village.
12. The identity of this area and the associated Urban Village context includes the enclosing foothills, the golf course land, the village, the existing urban form and now the developing Penihana North property as identified on **Attachment 3**.
13. The CDL property on the corner of and bounded by Tram Valley and Christian Roads ("**the Site**") is inherently part of this core urban village notion that resides in the Swanson Village identity as an obvious physical and perceptual reality. That is, it can be seen as forming a peripheral part of the neighbouring urban activities to the west and north rather than simply being seen as a separate and exclusively rural area. This is identified on **Attachment 4**.
14. By way of explanation:
 - (a) The Site is a short walking distance from both the commercial centre and the railway station and is bordered by the railway (across Tram Valley Road) for much of its northern and western boundaries.
 - (b) That proximity is not compromised by any significant change in topography or vegetation that might result in the Site being perceived as a distinct area with different characteristics. The site has only a gentle upward slope to the south and contains very little vegetation apart from grass.
 - (c) The Site is adjacent to the Penihana land and, as noted below, the urban development on that site wraps around and envelops the eastern and south eastern

parts of the Site. Visually, the Site is now more connected to the urban Penihana land to the east than it is to the rural land to the south.

- (d) Moreover, the Site is now the direct nexus of the urban transitional landscape. In this sense, at an immediate visual level Penihana is more divorced (ie: spatially and visually separated) from the core elements that comprise the actual Swanson Village Landscape character.
 - (e) The decision to urbanise Penihana North is benign, as is the same opportunity for the CDL land - the Site.
- 15. As an urban backdrop, that Swanson Village Character is further captured by the essence of the low key nature of the commercial centre (**Attachment 5**) and the contribution that the Swanson Railway Station and its associated parkland and pedestrian/cycleway (**Attachment 6 and 7**) make to the attraction and aesthetics of the village.
 - 16. The other obvious and positive urban design spatial element is that of proximity to the regional arterial road and rail transport infrastructure. Both the Penihana North Land and the CDL Land lie within the 500m - 5 minute walking distance of the railway station (**Attachments 2 – 4 inclusive**)
 - 17. In my opinion, the Swanson Urban Village and its associated contextual landscape (of which I consider the Site forms a part) is fundamentally urban in nature and character, even though the Site itself is not currently developed..

The Consolidation of Swanson Village

- 18. In anticipation of potential peri-urban and urban development in the Swanson Village core urban zone area (**Attachment 4**), pedestrian oriented infrastructure has already been implemented. At the Christian Road/Tram Valley Road and railway line confluence and intersection a dedicated pedestrian walkway crossing has been constructed. This is safety gated and displays appropriate safety signage for an urban context.
- 19. This pedestrian infrastructure is located at the boundary of the CDL land on the northern side of the Christian Road and Tramway Road intersection. (**Attachment 8**)
- 20. In addition, the construction phase of the Penihana North land development programme is now significantly advanced.
- 21. From a spatial perspective, the village as a distinctive and identifiable urban form is now emerging as a physical reality in the landscape. (**Attachment 9**) . The recent Penihana North development construction work is a fundamental example of this extended and yet contained urban village transition and form.
- 22. By way of explanation:

- (a) Christian Road has been reformed (kerb and channel) at the Penihana/CDL common Christian Road boundary location. This is now a T-intersection and the Christian Road egress from the west is now governed by a Stop Sign. (**Attachment 10**)
 - (b) Significant other urban infrastructure roading patterns within the Penihana North land development area are also nearing completion. (**Attachment 11**)
 - (c) One of the more explicit transformations of this area, other than the sheer scale of the impending housing settlement change, is the landscape character change that is experienced on entering Christian Road and the 'foothills' environment. The first element of scale is the recently constructed retaining walls that now visually dominate the urban/rural transition. These will be moderated in due course by the establishment of dwellings on these newly constructed building platforms.
23. To reinforce this, **Attachment 10** shows the retaining wall and marked out sections, that will ultimately create a backdrop to the CDL land. This new housing typology is essentially tantamount to 'ribbon-development' This future housing will wrap around and create the obvious urban character that contains the south-east corner of the Site. The retaining wall and road are clearly urban in character. The retaining wall also provides a definitive and emphatic boundary between the urban area to its north and the rural area to its south. The eastern part of the Site is now visually to the north of that apparent strong boundary. The CDL land has, as a consequence, become contained, in a visual and experiential sense, at least from Christian Road, by urban settlement and development.
24. In my opinion, these developments have significant implications for the Site. The fact that the eastern part of the Site is now visually within the northern ("urban") area would create a visual tension and conflict were the Site to be retained as rural land. That would involve the boundary between the urban and rural areas turning back on itself before carrying on along Christian Road to the north. Visually, the relationship between the Penihana land and the Site would be ambiguous and confusing.
25. In my opinion that would compromise the long-term defendability of the boundary between urban and rural areas, which can only be resolved through incorporating the Site within the urban area. Accordingly, this factor and analysis strongly supports the urban transformation of the CDL land. I consider that the physical works that have been carried out on the Penihana land are a significant physical change in comparison with circumstances that existed during the Variation 88 Swanson Structure Plan decision-making process.
26. Not only do the works on the Penihana land suggest that retention of the Site within the rural area is problematic, they also increase the attractiveness of enabling urban development on the Site. In my opinion, provided urban development on the Site is undertaken in a manner that is consistent with and complementary to the treatment of the interface between the urban and rural areas on the Penihana land, it can reinforce both the integrity and character of urban

development around the Swanson Village and the creation of a permanent, defensible boundary between the urban and rural areas on the south side of Swanson.

27. By way of explanation:

- (a) The Penihana development suggests that topography, planting and the placement of large lots along the southern boundary of the urban area can create a strong and defensible boundary.
- (b) The southern boundary of the Site generally aligns with the southern boundary of the Penihana land and it is appropriate to continue that alignment as the interface between the rural and urban areas.
- (c) It is feasible (and it is proposed by CDL) to manage the southern boundary of the Site in a way that discourages taller buildings that would intrude into the landscape and that ensures provision of planting that defines the interface between the rural and urban areas.
- (d) The provision of residential of element on both sides of Christian Road on the site and the Penihana land will create an impression that the two developments are complementary and integrated. They both use the same roading links to the village and can (and will) use a similar gradation in lot sizes as development moves up the slope to the south.

28. Given these observations, in my opinion the CDL land is a critical future element (Site) and can contribute significantly to the emerging Swanson Village urban landscape character.

29. The CDL land now sits as an obvious localised extension to the RUB.

The CDL Proposal

30. The Site comprises some 6.7987 Hectares of land and is roughly in triangular shape bounded on two sides by Tram Way Road to the west and Christian Road to the east. (**Attachment 12**)

31. A small reserve, a childcare centre and a residential dwelling are located adjacent to Christian Road.

32. The property slopes generally in a northerly direction from approximately 65 masl at the southern boundary to approximately 45 masl at the northern boundary.

33. Two small watercourse gullies, which are tributaries of Swanson Stream, drain the moderate to contoured slopes. The southwestern margin of the Site slopes towards Tram Valley Road.

34. The Site's vegetation predominantly comprises rough pasture. Site vegetation is described in the evidence of Ms. Keren Bennett.

35. The general condition of the Site and existing site features, including the vegetation patterns and buildings is illustrated on **Attachments 13 and 14**.
36. The site design analysis (**Attachment 15**) identifies the fundamental site drainage and ridgeline contour patterns, and promotes the central stream tributary as a core green network that can be utilised for stormwater management and recreational/walkway linkage. With ecological and vegetation enhancement this green network will become an important landscape feature on the Site. The preliminary pedestrian and vehicle circulation patterns are also analysed in **Attachment 15**.
37. **Attachments 16 and 17** illustrate the indicative proposed scheme plan layout for the Site.
38. Settlement density is illustrated as reducing from north to south, with 600m² sites located on the lower portion of the Site, medium 1200m² sites in the middle portion of the Site and larger 2000m² sites adjacent to the rising land at the southern boundary.
39. This site density strategy is to retain the high density development towards the village and also to integrate with and complement the Penihana land density. In addition, the properties along the upper contour of the site will be of rural residential size and character. This respects the transition from the Swanson Village urban to rural-residential to rural character of the Waitakere foothills environment.
40. A planted 10m wide covenant and 10m wide 'no build zone' are also proposed to reinforce that rural character transition at the southern boundary of the Site.
41. **Attachment 17** also illustrates how the future roading patterns of the Penihana land will integrate with the central through road as proposed on the CDL land.
42. The drainage pattern, stormwater management device and pedestrian green network link is also illustrated.

Conclusion

43. In conclusion, The CDL land now sits as an obvious localised extension to the RUB.
44. The site planning and design layout has been carefully considered in the manner it respects the local Swanson Village growth opportunities and as importantly how the integration of the Site responds to its Waitakere foothills location and landscape character.

Dennis John Scott

17 November 2015