

Before the Hearings Commissioners at Christchurch City Council

under: the Resource Management Act 1991

in the matter of: an application by Ryman Healthcare Limited for resource consent to establish and operate a comprehensive care retirement village and associated activities at 100 – 104 Park Terrace and 20 Dorset Street, and 78 Park Terrace, Christchurch

between: **Ryman Healthcare Limited**
Applicant

and: **Christchurch City Council**
Consent Authority

Statement of evidence of **Sean Robert Dixon** on behalf of
Ryman Healthcare Limited

Dated: 6 January 2021

REFERENCE: Luke Hinchey (luke.hinchey@chapmantripp.com)

Nicola de Wit (nicola.dewit@chapmantripp.com)

chapmantripp.com
T +64 9 357 9000
F +64 9 357 9099

PO Box 2206
Auckland 1140
New Zealand

Auckland
Wellington
Christchurch



STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF SEAN ROBERT DIXON ON BEHALF OF RYMAN HEALTHCARE LIMITED

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My name is Sean Robert Dixon.
- 2 I am a Landscape Architect at Design Squared Landscape Architects. I have held this position for 18 years. I hold a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University. I have 18 years' of professional experience as a Landscape Architect and 25 years' of containerised nursery experience. I have owned and operated a plant production nursery in Christchurch for the last 14 years.
- 3 I am an active member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.
- 4 I have been involved in many commercial landscape design projects across New Zealand and overseas. Such design projects have ranged from hotels and resorts, through to schools and medical centres. I specialise in the master planning and landscape design for aged care facilities across New Zealand.
- 5 I am familiar with Ryman Healthcare Limited's (*Ryman*) resource consent application to construct and operate a comprehensive care retirement village (*Proposed Village*) at 100-104 Park Terrace and 20 Dorset Street and 78 Park Terrace, Christchurch (*Site*). In this statement of evidence, I describe the parcel of land at 78 Park Terrace as the "Peterborough Site" and the parcel of land at 100-104 Park Terrace and 20 Dorset Street as the "Bishopspark Site". I refer to the Peterborough Site and Bishopspark Site together as the "Sites".
- 6 I prepared the Landscape Concept and Planting Plans provided with the Assessment of Environmental Effects dated March 2020 (*Landscape Plans*). I also provided landscaping inputs for the Section 92 Responses dated 18 May, 13 July, and 17 November 2020 (*Further Information Responses*).
- 7 I have visited the Site and its surroundings on numerous occasions.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- 8 Although these proceeding are not before the Environment Court, I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note (2014), and I agree to comply with it as if these proceedings were before the Court. My qualifications as an expert are set out above. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying

upon the specified evidence of another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 9 My evidence provides the following:
 - 9.1 A summary of the Landscape Plans for the Site, and the proposed planting methods;
 - 9.2 My response to the landscaping issues raised in submissions;
 - 9.3 My response to landscaping issues raised in the Council Officer's Report;
 - 9.4 My comments on the draft conditions; and
 - 9.5 My conclusions.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

- 10 The landscape design intent for the Bishopspark Site is to create outdoor spaces within the Proposed Village that are attractive, engaging, and functional for the residents and visually complementary to the Proposed Village's architectural design.
- 11 The landscape design for the Peterborough Site provides private courtyard spaces for the ground floor apartments. In the centre of the Peterborough Site, a multifunctional outdoor space is provided.
- 12 The landscaping provides gardens, courtyards, and a range of communal spaces. The gardens will include strategically placed specimen trees, with mixed native and exotic companion specimens. The planting scheme is intended to create visual interest and engagement with the landscaping.
- 13 The boundary treatments have been designed to balance streetscape integration, residential privacy, and security. The Park Terrace boundaries are based on a typical inner-city townhouse boundary with individual gated access from the ground level apartments. Moments of transparent aluminium fencing are intended to allow visual connections in and out of the Site. Planting softens the street frontage.
- 14 I have carefully considered the planting methods and plant selection to ensure successful tree and garden growth within contained or restricted planters. All of the planters will provide a sufficient soil volume for trees that are subject to ideal growing conditions. I consider the proposed planting methods will ensure

the landscaping will establish successfully and can be maintained over the long term.

- 15 I prepared a draft Landscape Management Plan for the Site, which will ensure the landscaping is established and maintained to achieve the landscape design intent.
- 16 I consulted with Council officers in relation to the landscape design for the Proposed Village, and several amendments were made in the Further Information Responses. It is therefore disappointing that the Council Officer's Report and supporting technical reports contained such extensive comments on landscaping. Nevertheless, I have considered the proposed amendments to the landscaping plan in the Council Officer's Report and have recommended alternative trees to satisfy almost all of the matters raised. I am preparing an updated *SK101 Resource Consent Planting Plan* to reflect my recommendations, which will be lodged prior to the hearing.

LANDSCAPE PLANS - BISHOPSPARK SITE

Overview of the Landscape Concept Plan

Drawing reference: SK100 Landscape Concept Plan

- 17 The landscape design intent for the Bishopspark Site is to create outdoor spaces within the Proposed Village that are attractive, engaging, and functional for the residents and visually complementary to the Proposed Village's architectural design.
- 18 Gardens and courtyards have been proportioned and divided to create both private and communal spaces. The communal spaces and facilities have been designed to provide a range of activities to service the residents of both the Bishopspark and Peterborough Sites. These activities include a pool and BBQ area, bowling green, and a central gathering area around the existing Chapel, which is sympathetic to the heritage of the Chapel and the Bishopspark Site.
- 19 Soft landscape treatments within the Proposed Village include relaxed, organic gardens with mixed exotic planting (such as Camellias and Rhododendrons) partnered with mixed companion specimens. Strategic placement of high-grade mixed evergreen and deciduous specimen trees throughout the Bishopspark Site is intended to complement the variation within the lower garden beds.
- 20 The diverse planting scheme is intended to create visual interest and engagement with the landscaping, through fragrance, texture, and colour that all residents will be able to enjoy. For more able residents, the meandering pathways and open, multifunctional turf spaces will provide opportunities for integrated seating areas and communal village activities.

- Drawing reference: SK101 Resource Consent Planting Plan*
- 21 Diversity in tree specimens through form, and seasonality assist in creating unique spaces that give residents a range of viewing and engaging experiences. Strategic tree placement of mixed deciduous and evergreen specimens that are complimentary to the Park Terrace setting is intended to soften the built form whilst filtering natural light and contributing to the visual and vertical structure of garden beds.

Street frontages

- Drawing reference: SK102, SK106-SK107*
- 22 The Park Terrace Street frontage has been designed to balance streetscape integration, residential privacy, and security.
- 23 The Park Terrace boundary will have modular walls and fencing configurations that are consistent with the architecture. This boundary treatment is based on a typical inner-city townhouse boundary with individual gated access from the ground level apartments onto Park Terrace. Strategic tree placement works to compliment this modulation. Moments of transparent aluminium fencing are intended to allow visual connections in and out of the Bishopspark Site and integrate the Proposed Village with the Park Terrace streetscape and Hagley Park beyond. The tiering of these walls along the Park Terrace boundary will complement the podium structure, and will also provide a split, vertical set back that allows for tiered planting to soften the street frontage.
- 24 The design for the main entrance to the Bishopspark Site provides separate pedestrian and vehicle accessways, both secured with transparent aluminium gates. Angled walls will provide space for signage and adequate visibility for vehicles. The layout has been designed to complement the geometry of the architecture and will be integrated within the balance of landscaping to the Park Terrace boundary.

- Drawing reference: SK108*
- 25 The Dorset Street frontage has a similar landscape design. Although the ground floor apartment does not have individual gated access, transparent fencing, and boundary planting has been designed to provide visual connections in and out of the Bishopspark Site and promote streetscape engagement.

LANDSCAPE PLANS - PETERBOROUGH SITE

Overview of the Landscape Concept Plan

- Drawing reference: SK100 Landscape Concept Plan*
- 26 The landscape design for the Peterborough Site provides private courtyard spaces for the ground floor apartments. These private deck and turf spaces will create courtyards that have been designed to complement the modular architecture and provide a private and individual space for the residents.

- 27 In the centre of the Peterborough Site, a multifunctional outdoor space is provided. This space will provide ample opportunity for communal resident activities.
- 28 Around the edges of the Peterborough Site, the soft landscape treatments include relaxed, organic gardens with mixed exotic planting (such as Camellias and Rhododendrons) partnered with mixed companion specimens. Strategic placement of high-grade mixed evergreen and deciduous specimen trees throughout the Peterborough Site is intended to complement the variation within the lower garden beds.
- 29 The diverse planting scheme will create visual interest and engagement within the landscaping, through fragrance, texture, and colour that all residents will be able to enjoy.
- 30 A protected Common Lime tree is located on the southern corner of the Peterborough Site. This tree will be retained, and will be underplanted with mixed, layered planting for additional visual amenity.

Drawing reference: SK101 Resource Consent Planting Plan

- 31 A diverse range of tree specimens (through form, and seasonality, and colour) will be used to create unique spaces that give residents a range of engaging viewing experiences. The strategic placement of mixed deciduous specimens is intended to complement the Park Terrace setting, soften the built form, filter natural light and contribute to the visual and vertical structure of garden beds.

Street frontages

- 32 The landscaping along the Park Terrace, Salisbury Street and Peterborough Street frontages has been designed to strike a balance between streetscape integration, residential privacy, and security.

Drawing reference: SK102, SK107-SK108

- 33 The Park Terrace boundary to the Peterborough Site will be landscaped in the same manner as the Park Terrace boundary to the Bishopspark Site, as described at paragraph 23 above.
- 34 The design for the main entrance to the Peterborough Site provides separate pedestrian and vehicle access. Deciduous specimen trees either side of the entrance will formalise a gateway and will be set back behind the walls for sign visibility. The low, tiered planting is intended to integrate the entrance with landscaping to the balance of the Park Terrace boundary.

Drawing reference: SK109-SK110

- 35 The Peterborough Street boundary will have the same landscape treatment as the Park Terrace boundary, although along a shorter

length. This landscaping has been designed to provide for strong visual connections into and out of the Peterborough Site, with interactive gated access also strengthening the integration into the Peterborough streetscape.

Drawing reference: SK111

- 36 A similar design approach has been applied to the landscaping along the Salisbury Street boundary. Although there are no individual courtyards, the transparent fencing and boundary planting is intended to provide visual connections in and out of the Peterborough Site and connect with the streetscape. An avenue of trees has been designed to complement the geometry of the architecture, while softening the built form. An accessible communal gateway will provide residents with the flexibility to move between the Bishopspark and Peterborough Sites.

PLANTING METHODS

Drawing references: Bishopspark Site SK103 and SK104, Peterborough Site SK104 and SK105

- 37 Several trees and gardens will be established overtop of a podium slab. I have carefully considered the planting methods and plant selection to ensure successful tree and garden growth within contained or restricted planters.
- 38 The trees will be planted using one of three different methods: an in-ground tree pit, a standalone tree planter, or an open-ended tree planter.
- 39 All these options will provide an appropriate growing medium for tree life longevity. Generally, planters will hold a minimum volume of 3m³. Some volumes may be less depending on specimen selection and their respective growth attributes. All trees will be subject to ideal growing conditions with quality growing mediums, aeration, annual trimming, irrigation, and drainage. Under these conditions, I expect that root growth will be notably less than that of a tree within an open-ground situation where there is competition for nutrients, water, and exposure to other environmental factors.
- 40 The garden beds will be planted in a 0.5m planter box overtop of the podium slab with drainage grid connecting into the stormwater services.
- 41 I consider the proposed planting methods will ensure the landscaping will establish successfully and can be maintained over the long term.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 42 I prepared a draft Landscape Management Plan for the Site. This management plan will ensure the landscaping is established and maintained to achieve the landscape design described above and shown in the Landscape Concept Plans.

RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

- 43 I have reviewed the submissions on the Proposed Village relevant to my area of expertise and identified the following key concerns:

43.1 Concerns the trees proposed to be planted along the Park Terrace street frontages are too small and too many, and suggestions that larger specimens in smaller numbers would be more reflective of the Park Terrace character;

43.2 Requests for additional native planting;

43.3 Concerns the trees to be planted in containers or planters will struggle to thrive and will not achieve their normal sizes; and

43.4 Concerns that the proposed trees will block daylight for residents.

- 44 I respond to these concerns below.

Planting on the Park Terrace frontages

- 45 In June 2020, I consulted with the Council in relation to the selection of the specimen trees to be planted along the Park Terrace frontages for both Sites (following the submission of the 18 May Further Information Response). As agreed with the Council officers at the time, I added larger specimens to the north-west corners of both Sites: An Oriental Plane on the Bishopspark Site and a Scarlet Oak on the Peterborough Site. Revision 4 of both planting plans (SK101), provided with the 13 July Further Information Response, captures these additions. As discussed below, the planting plans have been further refined in response to the Council Officer's Report.

Native planting

- 46 The landscaping across the Site will provide a mixture of native and exotic species. The planting plan (SK101) only shows the larger specimen trees that will be planted on the Site. Exotic trees are preferred for this purpose as they are a more appropriate size for the Site and grow better in an urban environment. Furthermore, the majority of native trees are evergreen and could create shading issues.

- 47 A mixture of native and exotic species will be included within the garden beds to provide a garden-type environment that is pleasant for residents and reflects the surrounding environment. The species and sizes of this planting will be determined within the detailed planting plans that will be prepared prior to the commencement of works but will include (but not be limited to): Kowhai, Coprosma, Muehlenbeckia and Hebes.

Planting in containers and planters

- 48 I address planting methods at paragraphs 37 to 41 above.

Blocking of daylight

- 49 Potential blocking of daylight for residents has been a key design consideration when specifying plant species and locations. To address this issue, the trees will be trimmed annually to ensure they are maintained to the minimum heights specified on the Planting Plans. These heights will be updated based on the updated landscaping plan, as discussed below. Furthermore, almost all of the trees selected for both Sites are deciduous. Evergreen Magnolia trees have been used on the Bishopspark Site. In contrast to the other specimens, these are significantly smaller trees, and have been sited appropriately to minimise any blocking of daylight.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL OFFICER'S REPORT

- 50 The following paragraphs respond to landscaping issues raised in the Landscape Report (dated 2 December 2020) prepared by Ms Jennifer Dray, the Arborist Report (dated 3 December 2020) prepared by Mr John Thornton and the Urban Design Report (dated 27 November) prepared by Ms Josie Schroder. I summarise the issues raised in those reports as follows:

- 50.1 The size of the planters/pits will constrain tree growth and health;¹
- 50.2 A lack of native species;²
- 50.3 Uncertainty regarding the eventual heights of the proposed trees;³

¹ Council Officer's Report, Appendix F – Arborist Report, paragraphs 21-23, 51-55. Council Officer's Report, Appendix H – Landscape Report, paragraphs 54-58.

² Council Officer's Report, Appendix F – Arborist Report, paragraph 58.

³ Council Officer's Report, Appendix F – Arborist Report, paragraph 38.

50.4 The species and scale of the specimen trees proposed does not adequately integrate the Proposed Village into the surrounding neighbourhood;⁴ and

50.5 The specimen trees will not be allowed to grow to their mature height, and pruning the trees to a managed height will appear unnatural and compromise their form and integrity.⁵

The size of the planters/pits

51 I address planting methods at paragraphs 37-41 above. I have extensive nursery experience and am confident of our proposed planting strategy, having grown stock in containerised pots.

52 The Further Information Response lodged in November also proposed increased container sizes. Mr Thornton has agreed that the increase in container size proposed in the Further Information Response is an improvement.⁶ Furthermore, based on our meeting at the Council on the 17 September, I understand Mr Thornton is comfortable with the balance of volumes that are proposed.

A lack of native species

53 I address the native planting strategy at paragraphs 46-47 above.

Uncertainty regarding heights of trees

54 I will clarify the heights for all trees across both Sites within the updated Resource Consent Planting Plans and Landscape Management Plan to be lodged prior to the hearing.

Specimen trees

55 Ms Skidmore and Mr Burns will address the landscaping as it relates to potential urban design, landscape, and visual effects.

56 It is frustrating to see that tree selection issues are still being raised in the Council Officer Reports when early substitutions were made in consultation with the Council to include more variety and size along the boundaries, as noted at paragraph 45 above. I was under the impression that some common ground had been reached with Council, until the Council Officer's Report was issued and raised the same concerns.

⁴ Council Officer's Report, Appendix B – Urban Design Report, paragraphs 68, 69, 86, 104, 105. Council Officer's Report, Appendix F – Arborist Report, paragraphs 37-41.

⁵ Council Officer's Report, Appendix F – Arborist Report, paragraphs 39-50. Council Officer's Report, Appendix H – Landscape Report, paragraphs 23-53.

⁶ Council Officer's Report, Appendix F – Arborist Report, paragraph 55.

57 I consider the specimen trees identified in the landscaping plans are appropriate for the Sites and their context. In my opinion, the proposed approach (including the proposed maintenance pruning) would result in a landscape that is consistent with the inner-city location of the Sites. Furthermore, the Proposed Village is not a park. The trees have been selected on the basis that they are fit for their urban application, while still acknowledging the context of Hagley Park.

58 Ms Dray and Mr Thornton refer to advice from Mr Laurie Gordon, an Arboricultural Advisor at the Council. I have not been provided with a copy of Mr Gordon's advice, but understand Mr Gordon considers planting trees that reach a maximum height of 8m would be better arboricultural practice than maintaining trees that can reach 15m at a height of 8m.

59 This approach is ideal, however urban environments are generally space constrained. There are very few trees within such an environment that are not maintained to a smaller size than what is expected at their maturity. Trees grow proportionately and should be maintained proportionately to preserve their natural structure and form.

59.1 I have identified below two examples of recently planted trees within Central Christchurch that will be unable to reach their full maturity. Example 1: Several Fastigiata Liriodendron trees located beneath the western façade of the justice precinct on Durham Street South. These trees would reach an estimated maturity of 20m high, yet the overhanging façade is no more than 8m high. These trees will be unable to achieve their full mature height and will need to be pruned at a height less than 8m if they are to remain in place.

59.2 Example 2: Several Quercus palustris trees located along the eastern façade of the EntX centre on Colombo Street. These trees reach a mature size of 20m high x 12m wide but have been planted no more than 2m away from the veranda of the building. They will be unable to achieve their full mature height and will need to be pruned in proportion to maintain the form of the tree.

60 I consider these examples demonstrate the large number of proposals within the same urban context that have clearly adopted the same methodology as proposed for the Proposed Village. Nevertheless, in response to the issues set out in paragraphs 50.4 and 50.5, the Council Officer's Report recommends a new condition 62 requiring various amendments to the landscaping plan. In response to the recommended condition, Ryman has asked me to propose amendments to the landscaping plan. I therefore address those amendments in the following section.

Amendments to the landscaping plan

Bishopspark Site

- 61 Ms Dray and Mr Thornton recommend a range of larger trees be planted along the Park Terrace boundary and at least half of them be allowed to reach their 15m+ height at maturity, which would in their view better respond to the character of Hagley Park.⁷ I have substituted the first Variegated Elm, north of the Park Terrace access, with a Liquidambar styraciflua, which will be allowed to achieve its natural height of 15m and help to achieve a range of specimens. I have also specified that the proposed Platanus orientalis will be allowed to achieve its natural height of 15m. These changes will be reflected in the updated *SK101 Resource Consent Planting Plan*.
- 62 Ms Dray recommends that two trees be planted on either side of the Park Terrace entrance to create a gateway experience.⁸ I understand that Ryman does not propose to amend the planting plan in this location in light of the agreement on planting reached with 90 Park Terrace.
- 63 Ms Dray raises a concern that proposed trees along the Dorset Street frontage will cause conflict with residents of apartments due to overshadowing.⁹ The Council Officer's Report recommends that a tree species with a mature height of 6m be established within the available space, so that they can grow to their natural height and form. I provide the rationale for placement and selection of tree species at paragraphs 37-41 above. Nevertheless, I have considered alternative species. I have substituted the proposed Fagus sylvatica 'Dawyck Purple' with Prunus 'Amanogawa' which is narrower and smaller in nature. This specimen produces white flowers and will contribute to the visual amenity of Dorset Street. This change will be reflected in the updated *SK101 Resource Consent Planting Plan*. I consider that these trees will be able grow to their natural height and form.
- 64 Ms Dray considers that the trees proposed on the boundary with 2-18 Dorset Street will not attain an adequate height.¹⁰ The Council Officer's Report recommends that a tree species with a mature height of 8m be established within the available space, so that they can grow to their natural height and form. I have substituted the proposed Ginkgo biloba 'Fastigiata' with Fagus sylvatica 'Dawyck Purple', which will achieve a mature height of 8m. The location of the raised planters for these trees and the adjacent pathway will be flipped to provide the Fagus sylvatica

⁷ Council Officer's Report, Appendix H – Landscape Report, paragraph 53.

⁸ Council Officer's Report, Appendix H – Landscape Report, paragraph 37.

⁹ Council Officer's Report, Appendix H – Landscape Report, paragraph 35.

¹⁰ Council Officer's Report, Appendix H – Landscape Report, paragraph 36.

with ample width for growth. This change will be reflected in the updated *SK101 Resource Consent Planting Plan*. I consider that these trees will be able to grow to their natural height and form.

- 65 Ms Dray recommends that the trees proposed on the boundary with 13-17 Salisbury Street be replaced with tree species with a mature height of 8m.¹¹ I have substituted the proposed *Liriodendron tulipifera* 'Fastigiata' with *Fagus sylvatica* 'Dawyck Purple', which will achieve a mature height of 8m. This change will be reflected in the updated *SK101 Resource Consent Planting Plan*. I consider that these trees will be able to grow to their natural height and form.

Peterborough Site

- 66 Ms Dray suggests the maintenance pruning of the oak and beech trees proposed for the Park Terrace frontage will appear unnatural. I have substituted the proposed *Quercus coccinea* with *Quercus robur* 'Fastigiata', which will be allowed to grow to its natural height. I have substituted the two *Fagus sylvatica* with two *Acer rubrum*, which will both be allowed to grow to their natural height.¹² This change will be reflected in the updated *SK101 Resource Consent Planting Plan*.

- 67 Ms Dray recommends that the trees to be planted to the boundary with 76 Park Terrace be moved to the northern side of the driveway.¹³ I understand that Ryman does not propose to amend the planting plan in this location.

- 68 Ms Dray and Mr Thornton, with support from Mr Gordon, suggest there is inadequate space for the planting of Fastigate Oaks along the Salisbury Street frontage, given their expected mature height and diameter over a 50-year period.¹⁴ They recommend different specimens that can be established in the available space. I have substituted the proposed Fastigate Oaks with *Prunus* 'Amanogawa', which is narrower and smaller in nature. This specimen produces white flowers and will contribute to the visual amenity of Salisbury Street. This change will be reflected in the updated *SK101 Resource Consent Planting Plan*. Although I was satisfied that the Fastigate Oaks would have had adequate space, I consider the new species will also have adequate space.

¹¹ Council Officer's Report, Appendix H – Landscape Report, paragraph 34.

¹² Council Officer's Report, Appendix H – Landscape Report, paragraphs 40-41.

¹³ Council Officer's Report, Appendix H – Landscape Report, paragraph 44.

¹⁴ Council Officer's Report, Appendix H – Landscape Report, paragraphs 46-50.

DRAFT CONDITIONS

- 69 I consider the proposed conditions to be suitable as they will ensure that landscaping will achieve and maintain the intent set out within the Landscape Plans and Landscape Management Plan for both Sites. An updated *SK101 Resource Consent Planting Plan* will be prepared to address the matters included in the new condition 62 recommended in the Council Officer's Report. Accordingly, it is my opinion that the recommended Condition 62 is not required.

CONCLUSIONS

- 70 The landscaping for both the Bishopspark and Peterborough Sites has been designed to provide a high level of amenity for both the future village residents and the surrounding neighbourhood. I am confident that the proposed planting methodology and Landscape Management Plan will ensure the landscaping design intent is successfully achieved.

Sean Dixon
6 January 2021