

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 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

Summary of evidence of **Rebecca Anne Skidmore** on behalf of Ryman Healthcare Limited

Dated: 25 January 2021

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SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF REBECCA ANNE SKIDMORE ON BEHALF OF RYMAN HEALTHCARE LIMITED

- 1 My full name is Rebecca Anne Skidmore. My qualifications and experience are set out in my statement of evidence dated 6 January 2021. I repeat the code of conduct statement contained in my statement of evidence.

Summary of evidence

Site and Planning Context

- 2 The Proposed Village will extend across two sites – the Bishopspark Site and the Peterborough Site. The Bishopspark Site previously contained the Bishopspark retirement village and the Anglican Bishop’s residence. The former Bishop’s Chapel remains on the Site. The Peterborough Site formerly accommodated a series of residential towers (up to 10 storeys), which were demolished following the earthquakes.
- 3 The Sites are located at the periphery of the Christchurch City Centre in a well-established neighbourhood. The Sites have primary and prominent frontages to Park Terrace. The built character of the neighbourhood is quite varied. The area has been through considerable built change, as a result of extensive damage resulting from the earthquakes. It is currently in a period of transition.
- 4 Both Sites are zoned Residential Central City in the Christchurch District Plan (*DP*). This zone provides for higher density residential development, and change to the existing environment is anticipated. The retirement village activity is a permitted activity on the Sites. The proposed buildings, including infringements of the built form standards, require restricted discretionary consent. My assessment has been guided by the existing context, the relevant DP objectives and policies, matters for discretion and built form standards.

Proposed Village

- 5 The design of the Proposed Village has been led by Warren and Mahoney. The design has been through an iterative process, with input from various project team specialists, including myself, the Council’s Urban Design Panel (*UDP*) and Council’s review staff. The site layout has been described by Mr Brown and Mr McGowan.

Assessment Methodology

- 6 My assessment has been based on architectural drawings, landscape plans and visual simulations; and has been informed by site visits; relevant planning provisions; and feedback from the Council’s UDP and technical reviewers.
- 7 My urban design assessment has been guided by the DP framework, which articulates how the factors identified in the New

Zealand Urban Design Protocol (2005) are to be achieved in this inner Christchurch location. The DP anticipates change in this inner city neighbourhood, and the built form standards provide a relevant guide as to the degree of change, and therefore the scale of development, that can generally be readily and appropriately accommodated by the environment. My urban design assessment has also been informed by the Ministry of Justice "National Guidelines for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design In New Zealand" (CPTED) and the Christchurch City Council's 'Safer Canterbury: Creating Safer Communities" (2004).

- 8 The methodology I have used for the assessment of landscape and visual effects is consistent with the NZ Institute of Landscape Architect's 'Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management Best Practice Guide (10.1)'.

Outstanding issues

- 9 I consider the material outstanding urban design, landscape and visual issues in dispute between myself and the Council's urban designer, Ms Josie Schroder, and the Council's landscape architect, Ms Jennifer Dray, relate to:

9.1 The visual dominance effects of the Building B02 north and south façades;

9.2 The residential amenity effects on the Dorset Street Flats, consented Stables building, and 6/17 Salisbury Street;

9.3 The visual quality of the Salisbury Street façade of Building B07, and its engagement with the street;

9.4 The residential amenity effects of Building B07 on 76 Park Terrace;

9.5 The residential amenity effects of Building B08 on 15 Peterborough Street;

9.6 The effects resulting from the loss of existing mature trees; and

9.7 The appropriateness of the tree planting proposal to the context.

- 10 I have addressed these issues throughout my summary of evidence in the relevant topic.

Urban Design Considerations and Associated Amenity Effects

Effects on the Wider Environment - Urban Structure and Character

- 11 While being mindful of the functional and operational requirements of the Proposed Village, considerable effort has been applied to

create a layout and collection of building forms and spaces that respond to the particular characteristics of the Sites and surrounding context and to make a positive contribution to the evolving character of the neighbourhood. In my opinion, these outcomes have been successfully achieved.

- 12 On the Bishopspark Site, the Site layout and configuration of building massing creates a strong and direct axis from Park Terrace to the heart of the Village with the Chapel providing a focal point for the social hub of the Village. The buildings are configured around a series of communal open spaces, and respond to the differing characteristics of the various boundary interfaces. The building forms have also been visually broken into a cohesive series of distinct forms through physical separation, stepping of buildings both in plan and elevation, façade articulation and the creation of distinctive rooflines. The majority of carparking is located in a basement ensuring the ground level is uncluttered by parking and multiple vehicular accessways.
- 13 On the Peterborough Site, the building layout and massing responds to the prominent broad and open corner location and its relationship to Hagley Park. The architectural concept for this Site was considerably amended in response to feedback from the UDP. I consider these changes have resulted in a more nuanced design response that better responds to the wider neighbourhood character.
- 14 Overall, I consider the Proposed Village will make a positive contribution to the evolving urban character of this area as it recovers from extensive earthquake damage.
- 15 A number of submissions consider the Proposed Village is of a scale, intensity and design that is not compatible with the established neighbourhood character. As noted, the DP framework anticipates an evolution and change within the Residential Central City zone, and the Proposed Village reflects this expectation. In addition, the neighbourhood character is already varied, and contains a broad range of building typologies including a number of apartment and terrace buildings. As noted, I consider the layout successfully responds to the characteristics of this location.
- 16 In response to the comments made by Ms Schroder and Ms Dray, I agree that vegetation makes an important contribution to the character and amenity of the neighbourhood. The large trees in Hagley Park make a particular contribution to its special character. However, vegetation within the Sites needs to be of an extent and scale that is compatible with a higher density living environment. The DP objectives and policies and the zone description do not emphasise the role of natural vegetation in this environment and the vegetation, apart from the Common Lime Tree, is not protected in any way. The retention of existing vegetation within

the Bishopspark Site would compromise the ability to achieve a suitable site layout that meets the functional and operational needs of the Village and provides a clear and logical structure. In my opinion, the comprehensive approach to planting associated with the Proposed Village will contribute to the amenity of the Sites and their surrounding context. It will do this in a manner that can be suitably integrated with the site layout and intensity of activity proposed.

Street Interfaces

- 17 The Bishopspark Site interfaces with Park Terrace (primarily Building B02) and Dorset Street (primarily Building B03):
- 17.1 I consider the vertical scale of Building B02 will provide a suitable level of enclosure to the street, with the building setback, unit orientation and façade articulation, together with the boundary treatment, creating a positive edge condition.
- 17.2 In my opinion, the scale of Building B03 sits comfortably in its Dorset Street context. The location and orientation of the building in relation to the street, its proportion and the large areas of glazing and balconies overlooking the street will create a positive street interface.
- 18 The Peterborough Site interfaces with Park Terrace (Building B07), Salisbury Street (Building B07) and Peterborough Street (Building B08):
- 18.1 The Proposed Village layout acknowledges the primacy of the Park Terrace frontage by creating a strong built edge and address to Park Terrace. The location of communal spaces at Level 3 provides good passive surveillance over the street. I consider the boundary treatment creates an appropriate balance between defining and providing enclosure to the outdoor terraces and maintaining engagement with the adjacent street.
- 18.2 Reflecting the street hierarchy, the Salisbury Street building frontage will be viewed as secondary to the Park Terrace frontage. From Salisbury Street, a clear visual break between the two Building B07 wings is created with views to the low-level entry pavilion beyond. While the end walls of Building B07 will create a strong built edge to the street, generous areas of glazing and juliet balconies facing this street, together with specimen tree planting along the boundary, will provide a positive street interface. I disagree with Ms Schroder's opinion on this façade, and consider it provides a high quality design that is suitable in this urban location. In my opinion, the separation to the two wings of Building B7, together with the punctuation of the solid

façade with windows and juliet balconies will create a positive built edge.

18.3 Building B08 presents a narrow end to Peterborough Street, with a façade that is stepped in both plan and elevation, generous glazing and balconies, and retention of the Common Lime Tree, creating an appropriate and positive street interface.

19 In my opinion, the location and scale of specimen tree planting (including the amendments to the landscape masterplan now proposed) is suitable to contribute a vegetated quality to the streetscape and complement the Proposed Village buildings. I note that tree planting along street boundaries is not intended to mitigate the effects of the buildings, but rather to enhance the streetscape and the Village's relationship to it.

Amenity of Surrounding Properties

20 Ryman's comprehensive and iterative design process included extensive consideration of the characteristics of surrounding properties to maintain a suitable level of amenity. The majority of the properties surrounding the Sites are residential, although some commercial properties are located to the east of the Bishopspark Site. The Dorset Street Flats have heritage values. However I do not consider these values change the approach to assessing amenity effects such as overlooking or shading effects, which relate to the residential use rather than its heritage values.

21 The potential for overlooking/privacy amenity effects on surrounding properties has been addressed through separation from the neighbouring buildings, the orientation of buildings and units, setbacks of facades, and the location, size and treatment of windows and balconies, including the use of louvres. I consider the Proposed Village will not result in inappropriate overlooking or loss of privacy for neighbouring properties.

22 The Proposed Village will result in varying degrees of shading of neighbouring properties. However, shading is expected in a central city environment. The potential for shading amenity effects on surrounding properties has been addressed through compliance with the recession plane standards to the extent possible and the location and massing of buildings. I consider the Proposed Village will not result in inappropriate shading effects for neighbouring properties.

23 I respond to Ms Schroder's comments on amenity effects on neighbouring properties as follows:

23.1 *Dorset Street Flats:* With a primary orientation to Dorset Street, there is limited visual connection from these

dwellings to the Site. I consider the adverse visual effects will be low.

23.2 *76 Park Terrace:* I agree there are low visual dominance effects, despite the sensitive transition created by the stepping down of the building form. Ryman has subsequently proposed a darker, more recessive colour for the lift shaft area, which creates a greater differentiation between building elements and reduces those effects.

23.3 *15 Peterborough Street:* I consider the adverse visual effects will be low (minor) in light of the existing vegetation on this property, the proposed planting in the Site and the design of Building B08, including the simple articulation creating a subdued interface with the upper level stepped back and creating the appearance of a roof form that terminates the building.

24 In relation to Ms Dray's recommendation that two large trees be provided either side of the Park Terrace access, I consider this recommendation would result in shading of 90 Park Terrace.

25 I do not support Council's recommendation that trees be provided along the northern side of the Peterborough Site access and not the 76 Park Terrace boundary. Because of the existing trees/vegetation on 76 Park Terrace, the proposed trees will not result in additional shading of 76 Park Terrace.

26 I respond to the written statement lodged by L and G Goodland, the owners of 5 Salisbury Street, as follows:

26.1 A garden area is located adjacent to the boundary with 5 Salisbury Street. The south-western wing of Building B01 is the nearest building, located to the east of the boundary.

26.2 *Privacy/overlooking effects:* At paragraph 174 of my evidence, I noted that the Proposed Village will not cause any overlooking effects as this property is currently vacant. Even if 5 Salisbury Street was occupied, Building B01 in this location is well setback and not oriented towards the property, so undue overlooking effects would be avoided.

26.3 *Shading effects:* Ms Goodland suggests I incorrectly represented the shading as being in south-western corner of 5 Salisbury Street. I acknowledge this was a typographical error in my Memorandum dated 7 July 2020, but note the rest of my assessment made it clear the shading was over the rear of the property. The shading is caused by the south-western corner of Building B01.

26.4 At paragraph 175 of my evidence, I address the shading effects on 5 Salisbury Street. I remain of the opinion that adverse amenity effects resulting from shading on 5 Salisbury Street, in the context of this inner-city environment, will be less than minor and do not rely on the property being vacant to reach this conclusion.

26.5 *Visual dominance effects:* at paragraphs 257 to 258 of my evidence, I describe the features of the Proposed Village that ensure visual dominance effects on this property will be negligible. I note in particular that the garden area on the boundary with 5 Salisbury Street will provide a vegetated interface and open aspect.

On-Site Amenity

27 The Proposed Village is designed to cater for a range of requirements and preferences for future residents. Various amenities and communal open spaces are provided. The Sites have been designed to provide clear, safe and easy circulation around the Proposed Village ensuring all communal amenities are accessible.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

28 I consider the CPTED principles have been successfully addressed in the Proposed Village design through layout and provision of connections, integration and engagement with surrounding context and lighting of communal outdoor spaces. I also note that the sense of shared ownership and overarching management and maintenance of the Village by Ryman will make a particular contribution to the safety of the Sites.

Landscape Effects

29 I consider the proposed Site layout, building configuration and architectural design responds to the characteristics of the location, the interfaces with immediately surrounding streets, and the Sites themselves. In particular, Building B02 and B07 will make a positive contribution to the evolving character of the Park Terrace street corridor. The provision of basement carparking is also beneficial as it reduces the dominance of vehicle accessways and parking.

30 I consider the design of open spaces and associated planting will complement the built elements of the Proposed Village and will assist to embed the Village in its wider context. In my opinion, the scale of planting proposed is suitable for this inner city residential location. In my opinion, the scale and form of planting proposed is suitable for an inner-city residential environment rather than trying to replicate the character of Hagley Park.

31 I note that the Council's landscape architect, Ms Dray, has primarily focused on the 'adequacy' of the proposed tree planting

on the boundaries of the Sites, rather than providing an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Village. I do not agree that amendments to the landscape design are required to mitigate adverse landscape effects of the Proposed Village or better integrate it into its context. I have, however, considered the amendments to the planting plan proposed by Mr Dixon, and I agree with his recommendations.

- 32 Overall, I consider the Proposed Village design achieves a suitable balance between ensuring cohesion between the Sites and creating visual interest and a grain that respects the differing characteristics of the Sites and their respective surrounding contexts. In my opinion, the Proposed Village will make a positive contribution to the landscape character of this neighbourhood that is gradually re-establishing after the earthquakes.

Visual Effects

- 33 My evidence addresses visual effects on the primary groups that comprise the viewing audience, being: users of the surrounding street network; residents and users of immediately adjoining properties; residents and users of properties in the wider neighbourhood; and users of Hagley Park.

Users of the surrounding street network

- 34 Users of the surrounding street network are less sensitive to change due to the transient nature of their viewing experience.
- 34.1 For users of Park Terrace, Building B02 and Building B07 in particular, will result in considerable visual change. However, I consider these buildings are appropriate in the context of the wide street corridor, the Park Terrace/Salisbury Street corner site, and the open space expanse of Hagley Park beyond and have been designed to avoid any inappropriate visual dominance effects.
- 34.2 For users of Dorset Street, Building B03 will not appear incongruous with the varied location, scale and character of buildings in the surrounding context.
- 34.3 For users of Salisbury Street, there is a generous separation between the western and eastern wings of Building B07 and a clear step down in scale from the western to the eastern wing.
- 34.4 For users of Peterborough Street, Building B08 will be subservient to other buildings in the street corridor and the Common Lime Tree will continue to contribute to the vegetated quality of the streetscape.

For all of these viewing audiences, I consider the visual effects of the Proposed Village will be positive.

Residents and users of immediately adjoining properties

- 35 As noted earlier, the comprehensive and iterative design process included extensive consideration of the characteristics of surrounding properties to maintain a suitable level of amenity. Matters considered included the location of dwellings on properties, their orientation and the location of primary outdoor living spaces in relation to the Site.
- 36 I consider the potential for adverse visual amenity effects on residents and users of immediately adjoining properties has been effectively addressed through the separation from the neighbouring buildings, modulation, angling and articulation of the building facades, the location, size and treatment of windows and balconies, the design of upper levels to be contained in a roof form, and variations in materials and colours to create visual interest. The proposed planting is not intended to generally mitigate any visual effects on neighbours, but in some cases will provide a soft visual foil between proposed buildings and neighbouring properties.
- 37 The Proposed Village will result in considerable visual change when viewed from a number of surrounding properties. However, such change is consistent with the DP expectation of higher density residential development. I consider the Proposed Village will result in negligible – low adverse visual effects on the users of immediately adjoining properties.

Users of properties in the wider neighbourhood

- 38 For the users of properties in the wider neighbourhood, including those on Dorset Street, the Proposed Village will integrate well with the surrounding context and will not appear incongruous. For users of properties facing the Peterborough Site, particularly those on the northern side of Salisbury Street, the magnitude of visual change will vary from moderate to high. However, separation is provided by the wide intersection/street, the pocket park and planting along the street edge. Building B07 also creates a well-ordered configuration with an open space separation between the two wings. In the context of the considerable change anticipated for this area, I consider the Proposed Village will result in positive – negligible adverse visual effects on these properties.

Users of Hagley Park

- 39 The Proposed Village will be visible to users of the pathway running along the Avon River and from within Hagley Park. I consider Buildings B02 and B07 are well articulated and terminated by a distinctive roofline. The proposed planting will complement (rather than replicate) the planting within Hagley Park to reinforce the vegetated quality of the neighbourhood. From further within Hagley Park, the mature trees and distance will obscure views. Overall, I consider the Proposed Village will result in positive visual effects on users of Hagley Park.

Visual quality

- 40 Ms Schroder comments on the blank northern and southern facades of Building B02. I consider the simple façade treatment avoids overlooking effects, while a blank appearance is avoided through stepping and angling of the walls, and the treatment of the upper level. When travelling along Park Terrace, oblique views to the facades will also be variously obscured by the apartment building at 108 Park Terrace and the oak tree at 90 Park Terrace.
- 41 Ms Schroder also comments on the eastern façade of Building B08. I consider the restrained treatment of this façade is appropriate given it interfaces with another property. It is punctuated by windows, and the upper level is differentiated to appear as a terminating roof form. I consider this is suitable.

Specimen tree planting

- 42 I do not agree with the opinions expressed by the Council's urban designer Ms Schroder and the Council's landscape architect Ms Dray regarding the tree planting. I do not consider any planting is required to mitigate adverse visual effects of the Proposed Village buildings. Rather, the planting is proposed as an integral part of the Village design to contribute to both the on-site amenity and the amenity of the surrounding environment.

Conclusions

- 43 In conclusion, I consider the Proposed Village has been well designed to reflect the District Plan expectations of change in this environment. In my opinion, it will: respond appropriately to the wider neighbourhood context and character; provide positive engage with the adjacent streets; integrate the historic Chapel as a key ordering element for the Bishopspark site structure; avoid unacceptable potential residential amenity effects on neighbours; and contribute visual quality and interest to the neighbourhood as it transitions out of the disruption caused by the earthquakes.
- 44 I support the Proposed Village from an urban design and a landscape and visual effects perspective. I have not identified any effects or concerns that would justify consent being declined.

Rebecca Anne Skidmore
25 January 2021