

CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN
PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE 11
ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Primary Purposes of the district plan

The effects on the environment of the proposal can be identified from the objectives and policies of the Specific Purpose Otakaro Avon River Corridor zone. The intended priority and other outcomes of the zone are well described in the single objective for the zone, as follows.

13.14.2.1 Objective - Regeneration

- a) *The regeneration of the Specific Purpose Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor achieves the following priority outcomes:*
- i. *Significant areas of restored natural environment containing a predominance of indigenous planting, wetlands and restored habitat for indigenous fauna, birdlife and indigenous species, improved surface water quality and provision for the practice of mahinga kai;*
 - ii. *Flood hazard and stormwater management infrastructure that mitigates natural hazard risks for the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor and surrounding areas and is integrated with the natural landscape;*
 - iii. *Accessibility and connectivity across and along the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor, and with existing communities; and*
 - iv. *A predominance of natural and open spaces, with limited areas of built development concentrated in specific Reaches, residential areas, Activity Area Overlays and Landing Overlays.*
- b) *The Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor supports opportunities for other uses and activities that are compatible with the priority outcomes in a. above, including:*
- i. *Increased opportunities for recreation, cultural activities and community-based activities;*
 - ii. *A range of visitor attractions and limited small-scale retail activities;*
 - iii. *Limited residential development on the outer edge of the Zone to improve integration between the edge of existing neighbourhoods and the activities within the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor;*
 - iv. *Varied learning, experimenting and research opportunities, including testing and demonstrating adaptation to natural hazards and climate change; and*
 - v. *Transitional activities and structures where these do not compromise the priority outcomes in a. above.*
- c) *The continuation of pre-earthquake activities on privately-owned properties that still exist within the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor.*

Assessment

The proposal will not contribute to natural regeneration, natural hazard mitigation, accessibility, recreational or cultural purpose in subclause (a) of the objective. However it is considered to be consistent with subclause b) iii, as it would provide an enhanced green frontage to Fitzgerald Avenue and be a relatively small residential development at the outer edge of the zone in a location which would provide a clean and easily identifiable boundary between the green spine and adjacent housing areas. It is fully consistent with subclause c).

Several policies follow this objective.

13.14.2.1.1 Policy - Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor Areas

- a) *Recognise that areas within the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor have different priorities, characteristics and expected levels of built form, by spatially defining different areas within the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor and managing these areas to:*

- i. *Provide for the activities identified as 'Intended Activities' in Table 1 below, and ensure other activities are compatible with the 'Character Outcomes' and 'Intended Activities' in Table 1 below.*
- ii. *Avoid other activities that are not compatible with the 'Character Outcomes' or 'Intended Activities' in Table 1 below.*

Provide for limited retail activities which support the 'Intended Activities' within the Zone, while ensuring that they do not undermine the continued viability of nearby commercial centres.

Table 1- Corridor Areas And Overlays of Policy 1 states that the for the Green Spine

The Green Spine is to be predominantly natural open space providing for stormwater management, flood protection and significant ecological restoration, with enhanced indigenous habitat and mahinga kai opportunities.

Stormwater management and flood protection activities are to be integrated into a naturalised and ecologically restored environment.

The Green Spine will be largely free of built development, providing a continuous area of public open space with trails, paths and footbridges, extending from the central city to the sea.

Built development and other activities will be largely limited to and concentrated in the Landing Overlays, Edge Housing Area Overlays, an Activity Area Overlay and Trial Housing Area Overlays (refer below).

Assessment

The proposal is not completely consistent with this policy or Table 1 as these "largely" limit housing to defined Edge Housing Areas and Trial Housing Areas. However only a very small 18 metre wide frontage on Harvey Tce would be outside the Edge Housing Overlay with the rest of the site within it. Therefore it is considered that the subject sites come within the exception created by the use of the word "largely" in Table 1 of the policy.

The proposal does not follow the existing legal boundaries in all respects. In particular the proposed Edge Housing Area overlaps the boundaries of No 256 Fitzgerald Avenue and No 5 Harvey Tce slightly. This will be corrected by a later subdivision. This slight overlap does not affect the conclusion that the Green Spine will remain largely free of built development and built development will be largely limited to the areas referred in Table 1.

13.14.2.1.2 Policy - Supporting Regeneration Activities

- (a) *Recognise that the process of regeneration is ongoing and adaptive, and provide for this through:*
- i. *enabling transitional activities and structures where these do not compromise the priority outcomes in Objective 13.14.2.1a. or the Character outcomes and Intended Activities indicated in Policy 13.14.2.1.1;*
 - ii. *focusing the management of amenity effects on neighbouring properties and activities, predominantly at adjacent zone boundaries and boundaries of private properties that still exist within the Zone;*
 - iii. *utilising a global consent process where appropriate for particular categories of large scale and ongoing activities;*
 - iv. *updating the Development Plan in Appendix 13.14.6.1 to reflect the locations of facilities as they are developed; and*
 - v. *acknowledging that there will be some loss of indigenous biodiversity associated with the development of Landings and new infrastructure, except within inanga spawning sites which will be protected, and recognising that over time there will be a significant net gain in indigenous biodiversity across the Corridor as a whole.*

Assessment

It is considered that the proposal is consistent with subclauses I and ii of the policy and clauses ii to v are not relevant.

13.14.2.1.3 Policy - Providing for Stormwater Management, Flood Hazard Mitigation and Transport Infrastructure

- a) *Provide for stormwater management and flood hazard mitigation and protection works when undertaken by or on behalf of the Council, the Canterbury Regional Council or the Crown, having regard to potential adverse effects;*
- b) *Avoid activities that would individually or cumulatively significantly compromise the provision and effective functioning and integrity of identified, existing and proposed stormwater, flood management and transport infrastructure; and*
- c) *Provide for indigenous flora, fauna, habitat, mahinga kai and amenity restoration and enhancement in the design of stormwater and flood hazard mitigation and protection works.*

Assessment

The proposed development will be carried out in accord with the requirements of the Residential Medium Density Zone and Edge Housing Overlay and will be fully consistent with this policy. The site is not in a Flood Management Overlay. It is within the liquefaction hazard overlay and the relevant rules in chapter 5 Natural Hazards would apply to any development.

13.14.2.1.4 Policy - Continuation of Pre-Earthquake Activities

- a) *Provide for residential activities and other existing activities on existing properties in private ownership in the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor.*
- b) *Manage activities in the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor to ensure effects on existing privately-owned residential properties within the Zone are generally consistent with those anticipated in the Alternative Zone specified in Appendix 13.14.6.2.*

Assessment

This policy provides for precisely for what is being sought by this plan change application. It is considered that the policy is so specifically applicable that it should prevail over other policies if there is any inconsistency with those.

13.14.2.1.5 Policy - Residential Activities

- a) *Provide for limited new clustered, tiny or small footprint housing and temporary and permanent residential activities in identified Trial Housing Areas to enable opportunities for testing and demonstrating adaptation to natural hazards and climate change, where these:*
 - i. *are comprehensively designed in one plan for the whole Trial Housing location to:*
 - A. *complement and integrate with the surrounding natural and cultural environment, including the intended indigenous natural environment of the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor;*
 - B. *provide safe and social communal spaces; and*
 - C. *provide visually attractive buildings and structures.*
 - ii. *avoid unacceptable risk to life and property from natural hazards.*
- b) *Provide for limited new residential development in identified Edge Housing Area Overlays where these are designed to front on to the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor and improve integration between the edge of existing neighbourhoods and the activities within the Zone.*

- c) *Other than in Trial Housing and Edge Housing Overlays, provide for one new residential unit on a site only where it is ancillary to, and required for, the primary activity on the site.*

Assessment

The proposal is almost entirely consistent with this policy, with the exception of the 18 metre wide frontage of 5 Harvey Tce, which is not consistent with subclause c). As noted above, the proposal is also considered to be consistent with the parent objective.

13.14.2.1.6 Policy – Design

This policy contains design criteria for built form activity in the various sub areas in the river corridor. If the sites are included in the table in Appendix 13.14.6.2 and the Edge Housing Overlay, then they would be developed under the provisions of the RMD zone and the Overlay, including their objectives, policies and rules¹.

13.14.2.1.7 Policy - Mana Whenua and the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor

- a) *Recognise the Ōtākaro Avon River as a taonga and a cultural landscape for which Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri exercise kaitiakitanga by ensuring values of cultural importance are managed, enhanced and/or protected.*
- b) *Manage activities within the Zone to restore the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor for mahinga kai and to improve water quality, recognising that land use activities can have adverse impacts on water resources.*
- c) *Where resource consent is required, require earthworks within the Zone to be undertaken in accordance with cultural best practice, including the adoption of an Accidental Discovery Protocol, the training of contractors in identification of archaeological sites, cultural monitoring, recording and other measures as informed by mana whenua.*
- d) *Recognise that sites where evidence of historic Māori occupation is uncovered through earthworks or development activities are wāhi tapu to mana whenua and that the manner in which the earthworks and land development continue should be informed by cultural advice.*
- e) *Provide for customary access for the purposes of mahinga kai as part of ecological restoration activities.*

The applicant has approached tangata whenua through Mahaanui Kurataio LtdT and has been advised that the proposal is unlikely to be of concern and does not need to be considered further unless in the unlikely event that the Council decides to refer it to MKT.

Landscape effects

A report by DCM Urban concludes that although the proposal would amount to a considerable change from the present open appearance of the sites, the visual effects of the proposal from a number of viewpoints would be less than minor or indiscernible. The report also concludes that Harvey Tce would provide be an appropriate edge between the river corridor and the adjoining residential development to the north and east of the sites. At present the sites have clean boundaries to Fitzgerald Avenue and Harvey Tce, medium density housing at 256 Fitzgerald Avenue to the north also owned by the applicant, housing to the north-east along

¹ Rule 13.14.4.1.1 P32 and 13.14.1.3 RD3

Heywood Tce which is zoned Residential Medium Density, and multi-unit housing to the east on Harvey Terrace which is zoned Residential Suburban Density Transitional but more closely resembles an RMD typology.

This boundary is therefore irregular, and a development boundary at Harvey Tce would present a distinct and attractive face to the river corridor, especially considering the river itself is approximately 180 metres away to the south and not visible from Harvey Terrace due to a low ridge of land between. There would be an 18 metre wide addition to the existing housing in Harvey Tce. The balance of the site frontage, which wraps around the Harvey Tce/Fitzgerald Avenue corner will be landscaped along its frontage at least to the extent required in the Edge Housing Overlay.

It is assumed that land between the river and Harvey Terrace will be redeveloped for purposes consistent with the primary purposes of the SPOARC zone, including the cycle trail which follows River Rd at the river edge in this location.

Restriction of access to No 254 Fitzgerald Avenue, which is a corner site, to its other frontage on Harvey Tce as a permitted activity will assist to preserve the continuity of landscaping treatment along Fitzgerald Avenue and the safety and efficiency of traffic movements on Fitzgerald Avenue.

Other effects

Positive Effects

Housing Supply

This proposed development would have the potential to produce an estimated 6-8 dwelling units in an excellent location if developed to its potential under the RMD zone and the Edge Housing Overlay. This would be a successful contribution to the national and local housing shortage. It would be in accordance with the Objectives and policies of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 20201 (the NPSUD), particularly Objective 3 which states

Regional policy statements and district plans enable more people to live in, and more businesses and community services to be located in, areas of an urban environment in which one or more of the following apply:

(a) the area is in or near a centre zone or other area with many employment opportunities

(b) the area is well-serviced by existing or planned public transport

(c) there is high demand for housing or for business land in the area, relative to other areas within the urban environment.

The proposal would also accord with Strategic Objectives 3.3.1 and 3.3.4(b) of the Christchurch District Plan which state that

3.3.1 Objective - Enabling recovery and facilitating the future enhancement of the district

- a) The expedited recovery and future enhancement of Christchurch as a dynamic, prosperous and internationally competitive city, in a manner that:*
- i. Meets the community's immediate and longer term needs for housing, economic development, community facilities, infrastructure, transport, and social and cultural wellbeing; and*

- ii. *Fosters investment certainty; and*
- iii. *Sustains the important qualities and values of the natural environment.*

3.3.4 Objective - Housing capacity and choice

- a) *For the period 2018-2048, a minimum of 55,950 additional dwellings are enabled through a combination of residential intensification, brownfield and greenfield development, made up of:*
 - i. *17,400 dwellings between 2018 and 2028, and*
 - ii. *38,550 dwellings between 2028 and 2048; and*
- b) *There is a range of housing opportunities available to meet the diverse and changing population and housing needs of Christchurch residents, including:*
 - i. *a choice in housing types, densities and locations; and*
 - ii. *affordable, community and social housing and papakāinga.*

Geotechnical Effects

Although buildings on the sites were damaged in the Canterbury Earthquakes and demolished, the stability of the parts of the site closest to the river has been improved by the construction of a substantial retaining wall along the river on the opposite side of Fitzgerald Avenue. A recent geotechnical report by Geotech Consulting Ltd, which is attached as Appendix 1, has concluded that all the land is suitable for medium density housing using lightweight construction and a hybrid TC2/TC3 gravel raft foundation system.

CONCLUSION

1. Potential ecological, amenity and recreational opportunities of the site
 - a) It is acknowledged that the whole site could be developed for ecological, amenity and recreational purposes. However there would be little such opportunity while the site remains in private ownership. Compared to the bulk of the river corridor it is a small, narrow site. It is separated from the river to the east by the wide heavily trafficked Fitzgerald Avenue and from the river to the south by Harvey terrace and a 200m wide strip of open land, and bordered on its other two sides by medium density housing. It would be most unlikely that a private owner would carry out such activity and it would be much more appropriate for a public entity, such as the Council to do so.
 - b) Because of the site's small size and lack of close connection to the river, these would be limited opportunities, compared to what could be achieved more comprehensively on the much more spacious land south of Harvey Tce.
 - c) There would be opportunity for planting along the Fitzgerald Avenue frontage and around the corner into Harvey Terrace to enhance the approach to the Green Spine under the Edge Housing Overlay of the Specific Purpose Zone. This is discussed further below. Because of the existing two-storey flats at No. 256 Fitzgerald Avenue it will not be possible to achieve a planted frontage along the full extent of this block face between Heywood Tce at the northern edge of the Specific Purpose Zone and Harvey Tce.
 - d) In the case of the rest of the Harvey Terrace frontage, this is considered to be a very small frontage and that ecological, amenity and recreational opportunities could be easily and

more appropriately achieved on the southern, undeveloped side of the road. This would ensure there is minimal loss of continuity of the river corridor and its values in this location.

- e) Other more active activities could include for example a children's playground or a picnic area. It is considered that there are ample and more attractive opportunities for such activities elsewhere within the green spine closer to the river. The site is too small for larger recreational or sporting facilities and such activities would not be particularly compatible with the purposes of the green spine in any case.
 - f) The site does not provide any useful opportunities for walking or cycling access to or along the river corridor that could not be equally well provided by Harvey Terrace and Fitzgerald Avenue. Access to the river corridor upstream to the west is restricted by the heavy traffic on Fitzgerald Avenue. Pedestrian and cyclists should not be encouraged to cross Fitzgerald Avenue along this frontage for reasons of safety. The City to Sea walkway/cycleway being developed by the Council in the vicinity is routed along River Rd much closer to the river.
 - g) Overall it is considered that the site offers a small but quite limited potential for ecological restoration, cultural and recreational opportunities, or for landscape enhancement/mitigation, and these would not outweigh the benefits of the site for residential development. It is also considered unlikely that such opportunities would be taken up while the site is in private ownership, except for frontage landscaping associated with residential development.
2. The extent to which the plan change will give effect to the Green Spine provisions,
- a) With the inclusion of 254 Fitzgerald Avenue in the Edge Housing overlay, and with appropriate frontage planting there, it will be possible to achieve the purposes of the Green Spine along most of this frontage, with the exception of No 5 Harvey Terrace. This is a single, 18m wide residential site, alongside other housing further to the east along this road. This would be a very small reduction in the Green Spine in the area. There would not be any additional gaps created in the Green Spine. The loss of any Green Spine qualities there would be negligible.
3. Why the proposal is more appropriate than the current applicable provisions
- a) It is estimated that the proposal would enable the provision of up to 6 medium density housing units in an attractive location close to the City centre. As noted above, the loss of the qualities anticipated in the Green Spine would be insignificant. Therefore the positive effects are considered to outweigh the costs by a significant margin.