

BEFORE A HEARINGS PANEL OF THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management
Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of Plan Change 13 to the
Christchurch District Plan

**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF GLENDA MARGARET DIXON
ON BEHALF OF THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL**

RESIDENTIAL HERITAGE AREAS

17 June 2025

INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is **Glenda Margaret Dixon**. I have the qualifications and experience set out in my evidence-in-chief. I summarise key points of my evidence here, respond to some of Dr Bruce Harding's statements on the Macmillan Residential Heritage Area, and respond to the evidence of Tim Joll for the Canterbury Rugby Football Union.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

2. I have been asked by the Christchurch City Council to provide evidence on:
 - The planning context of Residential Heritage Areas (RHAs).
 - The proposed policies and rules for Residential Heritage Areas.
3. I address these matters and submissions and further submissions on these matters in my s42A report. I reaffirm that I am complying with the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in presenting this summary of my evidence and responding to the submitter's evidence.
4. In Part 6 of my s42A planning assessment I provide an overview of the development of the proposed RHAs under PC13. RHAs aim to protect areas which have collective heritage values as distinctive and significant residential environments. During the assessment and mapping of the proposed RHAs I liaised extensively with Dr McEwan, Council's heritage consultant. I rely on her evidence to this hearing to make recommendations on the identification of individual RHAs, assessment of properties within them, and the potential for additional RHAs.
5. In Parts 8-14 of my s42A planning assessment I address particular issues raised by submitters and further submitters in relation to the planning provisions proposed for these areas and add further discussion on more general issues which have become evident through administration of the provisions since notification in 2023.

Live issues

6. Live issues raised by submitters and discussed in my evidence are:
- Issue 1 – Opposition to RHAs as a concept or opposition to so many RHAs (section 8.8, starting at page 46). This includes discussion of the difference between RHAs and Character areas at section 8.11.
 - Issue 2 – Support for RHAs/seek more RHAs (section 9, starting at page 56)
 - Issue 3 – Amendments sought to RHA rules so they are less restrictive (section 10, starting at page 58). This includes discussion of demolition policy and rules at section 10.3.
 - Issue 4 –Clarification of how RHA rules will work, and requests for minor amendments so the rules work better (section 11, starting at page 70). Clarity of the definitions of the four categories used within RHAs is covered in section 8.3.
 - Issue 5 - Opposition to or questioning of zoning proposed in PC14 in and around RHAs (section 12, starting at page 74)
 - Issue 6 – Other miscellaneous RHA related submissions e.g. provide economic incentives or compensation. (section 13, starting at page 75).

The provisions

7. As a result of the Council's withdrawals of parts of PC13 (described in the Council's opening submissions) only the core provisions for RHAs are left, with only a few references to RHAs elsewhere e.g. in the Chapter 9.3 policies. The core provisions are Rules 9.3.4.1.3 RD6 and RD7, which require a restricted discretionary activity resource consent for new buildings, alterations to exteriors which are visible from the street (my evidence recommends that this only apply to defining and contributory buildings) and for demolition of defining and contributory buildings. RD6 also requires consent for new and altered road boundary fences which are or will be over 1.5m in height. There are proposed Matters of Discretion for both RD6 and RD7 at 9.3.6.4 and 9.3.6.5 respectively.
8. In my evidence I have suggested some minor amendments to these rules and matters of discretion, e.g. that noted in paragraph 7 above, and for matters of discretion, to clarify that the focus of the RD consents is intended to be primarily on the area and only secondarily on the building. In my

opinion these core rules as amended are reasonable and justifiable and are the least restrictive provisions that could effectively implement the RHA concept.

9. I cover the requirements of sections 77I and 77J of the RMA in regard to the two RHAs in Policy 3 areas, the Chester St/Dawson St RHA, and the Inner City West RHA, in paragraphs 5.1.9 to 5.1.17.

The difference between RHAs and Character Areas

10. Appendix F and paragraph 8.11.2 of my evidence summarise the way that RHAs and Character Areas approach the different types of heritage or character values. RHAs have notable non-visual (historical, social, cultural and spiritual) values which Character Areas do not. Although there may be some similarity between the two in terms of architectural and contextual values, an historical lens is applied to these values for RHAs.

Demolition policy and rules in RHAs

11. I discuss demolition policy and rules in section 10.3 of my evidence. There is a difference in consent status between demolition of a highly significant or significant building (in the operative plan these are non-complying and discretionary activities respectively), and demolition of defining and contributory buildings in an RHA, which is proposed to be a restricted discretionary activity.
12. It appears from submissions that people mistakenly assume that needing a consent for demolition in an RHA means that demolition will automatically be refused. In paragraphs 6.1.27 and 6.1.28 I note that there had been two (now three) demolition consents approved, with only one being publicly notified and going to a hearing.
13. Submitters have stated that in respect of the amended Policy 9.3.2.2.8 Demolition of Scheduled historic heritage, that it is inappropriate for buildings located within a heritage area to be subject to the same demolition policy test as listed heritage items, i.e. they effectively seek a clearer distinction in the policy between scheduled and unscheduled buildings. In my s42A report I agree that this would be desirable and consider that it is appropriate to amend this policy to do this.

14. My proposed wording at paragraph 10.3.7 includes “strongly discouraged” for demolition of defining buildings and “discouraged” for demolition of contributory buildings. Although the verb “discourage” is not standard RMA language, it is used in the District Plan already in several places.¹ I consider that “discourage” and “strongly discourage” express a clearer policy position as a guide to applicants than the way the current demolition policy for scheduled items is worded. This merely sets out matters to which regard will be had, and leaves decisions to be made via consents.
15. I agree with Mrs Richmond’s recommendation that the base demolition policy for scheduled heritage items should be amended to express a clearer policy position such as “avoid where possible”. Doing this would create more of a hierarchy in the policy in which scheduled items or buildings are at the top of the hierarchy, and there is a distinction between defining and contributory buildings.

Notification issues learnt from experience

16. Experience with processing RD consents in RHAs since 2023 has identified issues with whether or not applications for demolition will be notified (see my evidence on this matter starting at paragraph 10.3.11 on page 66). When considering demolition in an RHA, it is difficult to conclude that demolition has less than minor effects on the immediate environment. If the heritage advice is that there are minor or more than minor effects, and this advice is accepted by consent planners, then notification becomes much more likely.
17. There are 1112 properties in RHAs, with 691 of these in Lyttelton². Each RHA has a majority of defining and contributory buildings which would require a restricted discretionary consent to demolish. In my view it is unreasonable to at least limited notify, and possibly publicly notify, nearly all demolition applications in RHAs.
18. The cost of resource consents goes up considerably with notification, as does the time taken to reach an outcome. In my view for contributory buildings it should be possible to reach an appropriate decision under section 104 of the Act, which still takes full account of heritage values,

¹ In Policy 6.9.2.1.1. Late Night Licensed Premises, Policy 15.2.6.3 Amenity (in relation to the Central City), Policy 15.2.8.2 Amenity and effects, and in several other places eg in various matters of discretion.

² Latest figures after all withdrawals of properties.

without involving the neighbours or other external parties. By definition contributory buildings are not those buildings which establish the heritage values and significance of the area. I do not favour defining buildings having a non-notification rule, because they are the more significant buildings in the area, and are likely to be of most interest to parties other than Council. Some are actually scheduled as well, and scheduled buildings are not limited by non-notification rules. My s42A assessment therefore recommends that a non-notification rule be inserted for demolition of contributory buildings in RHAs.

Amendments to evidence

19. At paragraph 12.1.2 on page 75 of my evidence I would like to strike out the last sentence in the paragraph beginning at “The zoning here as HRZ allows for.....” and extending to “where greater building heights are permitted”. I would like to replace that sentence with the following wording: “The zoning here as HRZ allows for a maximum height of 22m or around six storeys, as does the HRZ zoning for the western end of Chester Street RHA as a result of PC14 decisions. This latter western end is a “carve-out” from the surrounding Central City Residential Precinct, where greater building heights of up to 39m or around 12 storeys are permitted.”
20. At paragraph 5.1.14 on page 14 of my evidence, I would like to make a similar amendment, by replacing the words “a maximum height of 32m or 10 storeys” in relation to the Central City Residential Precinct with the words “a maximum height of 39m or 12 storeys”.

RESPONSE TO SUBMITTERS’ EVIDENCE

Dr Harding

21. Dr Harding has confused Residential Character Areas in the operative District Plan with the proposed Residential Heritage Areas in Plan Change 13. The map at p6 of this link, which can be found under “Updated Provisions and Maps” shows the two areas in comparison to each other. [App-9.3.7.9-for-hearing.pdf](#)
22. The areas are different because they are delineated on different factors or attributes. I have discussed the difference between RHAs and Character Areas in my evidence.

23. The operative Character Area does include the Cashmere Village Green. The Character Area extends to the south of the map in Appendix 9.3.7.9 as can be seen by using the Property Search function of the District Plan Maps, and clicking on the tab “other notations”.
24. I described Council’s consultation at the draft stage of PC13 and PC14 in the following PC14 document: [AP85711.PDF](#)

Mr Joll’s planning evidence for CRFU

25. Mr Joll’s evidence regarding Rugby Park in the Church Property Trustees North St Albans RHA contains some notable inaccuracies and there are a number of statements I disagree with.
26. Firstly Mr Joll’s paragraphs 34-36 and 39, which suggest problems with the notified version of PC13 policy wordings, are inaccurate. The notified provisions of PC13 can be found under the “Provisions” subtitle on the PC13 webpage, [Plan-Change-13-Rules-package-for-notification-2023-03-17-final.PDF](#). Those provisions show that the definition of “heritage values” is proposed to be modified by the insertion of the words “heritage area”. That change to the definition makes the references to “heritage values” appropriate, in Policy 9.3.2.2.2 for identification and assessment of heritage areas (p18 of the document linked above), and in the matters of discretion (p40-41 of the “rules package”). The amended Policy 9.3.2.2.5 on ongoing use, (p19 of the “rules package”) already references defining and contributory buildings.
27. Secondly, Mr Joll states in his paragraph 32 that the IHP for PC14 dismissed the section 32 report for heritage as not being robust. That Panel was not in fact referring to the current PC13 section 32 report, since they had decided they had no mandate to refer to that, but to a separate PC14 section 32 report, covering a number of qualifying matters more briefly (PC14 section 32 reports, Part 2 Section 2).
28. I agree that the PC13 section 32 report does not include any reference to the costs and benefits of including large open spaces in an RHA. This is primarily because I considered it to be valid to include these spaces in RHAs based on advice from Dr McEwan. Until the recent Council decision withdrawing the Piko/Shand and Heaton Street RHAs from PC13, the plan change had two other RHAs with large open spaces within them –

Harrington Park and Elmwood Park, and a number of smaller open spaces. The terminology used in the core RD6 and RD7 rules is “buildings” not “residential units”. This was deliberate, in order to allow for non-residential buildings in some RHAs, e.g. there was a Plunket rooms building in the Piko/Shand RHA and there is a church in the North St Albans RHA.

29. There is no major disadvantage to non-residential properties from being included in the RHAs, and this is especially the case since the withdrawal by Council of the area specific built form rules for RHAs. On a restricted discretionary application, the built form rules of the zoning of the property (Open Space Metropolitan Facilities zone in this case), will be a starting point or guide but are not binding. Rugby Park has a specific 8m height limit for new buildings, and a 10% site coverage rule, which already limit what can be done even without the existence of an RHA, so it is possible that consents could be required anyway, with heritage values simply being another factor in the mix.
30. I accept that I omitted to mention control over demolition in the RHA in my evidence in relation to the CRFU further submissions. I do not agree with Mr Joll that there is a high bar created by the words “whether options for retention and repair have been thoroughly considered and have been shown to be feasible or otherwise...” in the proposed policy. If the building itself has little merit (e.g. the corrugated iron fences) then it is likely that the effects of demolition of it would be assessed as being less than minor. This was the situation with the lunchroom and tuckshop on the old Girls’ High site at 32 Armagh Street, which were granted a demolition consent by Council in 2023.
31. I am not sure how Mr Joll arrives at the view that “the fencing outcomes for the RHA are focused on low-rise picket fencing and pool fencing”. Dr McEwan’s heritage report in the s32 report says: “*Low- and medium-height hedging, boundary walls and picket fences are generally in sympathy with the character of the houses*”. (last paragraph on p8 of her heritage report for the North St Albans area, PC13 Section 32 report Appendices).

Mr Brown’s evidence for CRFU

32. Mr Brown has confused Appendix 10 to the PC13 section 32 (which is the template for screening RHAs) with Appendix F to my section 42A evidence (which compares identifying criteria for RHAs with those for Character

Areas). Appendix F is not a review checklist. The statements at the top are my own, and were used to provide a convenient summary of the differences between the two types of areas, to persons unfamiliar with the two concepts.

33. There are two typographical errors at the end of paragraph 8.11.2 of my evidence in relation to those statements. The first should read “some character areas have no coherent history” and the second “some heritage areas do not have a particularly coherent character”.

Dated 17 June 2025

Glenda Dixon