

**BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of Proposed Plan Change 26 to the Operative Waipā  
District Plan

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**SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF CAROLYN JOY HILL**

**Dated 2 May 2023**

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**Introduction**

1. This supplementary statement of evidence addresses:
  - (a) Evidence presented by submitters on the character cluster provisions on 27 and 28 April 2023;
  - (b) Response to a query by the Commissioners regarding the use of the word “similar” in the character cluster provisions; and
  - (c) Response to the evidence of Kāinga Ora regarding character streets.

**Acknowledgement of submissions**

2. I acknowledge all private submitters’ submissions and confirm that their submissions have informed final proposed character outcomes.
3. I acknowledge Ms Jennifer Gainsford and Mr Murray Hislop’s support for character clusters and note that 9 out of 11 original submissions (related to character, made by private submitters) and 14 out of 27 late submissions supported the character clusters.
4. I acknowledge oral submissions made by Ailea Martin, Vaughan Martin, Oliver Bleskie, Steve Gow, Rodney Ross and Mr Bailey on behalf of Ms Hawkins.

**Response to points raised in submissions**

5. Several submitters queried why a further review was necessary following the original PAUA report. I clarify that the Lifescapes report was necessary to undertake site-specific analysis as required by Amendment Act 77L and in response to submissions calling for more detailed assessment.
6. Several submitters queried the justification of character as a qualifying matter in light of the need for urban intensification. I clarify that I support the need for intensification as required by the Amendment Act and the NPS-UD, and I consider that an appropriately stringent approach has

been taken to considerations of character to avoid overly extensive coverage – this has resulted in clear and small character clusters being identified, and character streets being reduced from 10 → 4. I consider that this strikes an appropriate balance between allowing for intensification and retaining historic places that are important to Waipā communities in accordance with the ‘other’ qualifying matter requirements.

7. Several submitters, particularly the Ross family and Mr Gow, queried what changes are allowed to a dwelling within a character cluster. I confirm that new single storey construction and alterations or additions at the rear of sites is a permitted activity, or anywhere on non-character defining sites if single storey and 6m setback (particularly relevant for Mr Gow’s property at 76 Princes Street); interior alterations are permitted, maintenance work including roof replacements, repainting etc. are all permitted activities.
8. Furthermore, the Waikanae decision has resulted in further changes to the proposed PC26, with a “character cluster qualifying matter overlay” now being established – this means that what is allowed on properties covered by this overlay (and not previously identified as part of an existing “character cluster” within the operative district plan) is no more restrictive than what was previously allowed under the operative district plan settings.
9. Several submitters spoke for an opt-in approach to character clusters – essentially spot-zoning in the nature of a historic heritage type planning tool. I clarify that while I would welcome further research and consideration of Waipā places in terms of historic heritage values under RMA Section 6, the character cluster tool is about collective physical and visual qualities that together represent historical themes of Waipā’s development and its sense of place. It is therefore important for

character clusters to be identified and managed in terms of the values of the cohesive whole, not “protected” as individual sites.

10. Several submitters spoke of the “ordinary-ness” of their properties and their being nothing special or different from the broader urban area. While I acknowledge that there is nothing especially “grand” about many of the character clusters, site-by site / street-by-street survey as set out in the Lifescapes Report shows that historically-derived characteristics collectively manifest in identified character clusters in a legible way, where these same characteristics are dispersed and less coherent elsewhere.
11. Furthermore, while the character clusters may be ordinary now, this has been in the context of low density ‘norms’ – this is anticipated to significantly change in the coming decades through MDRS-level intensification, making it more important to retain small coherent clusters that represent themes from the past for Waipā towns.

**Response to point raised by Commissioners**

12. I have reviewed the use of the word “similar” in relation to restricted discretionary assessment of modifications within character clusters, following the query of commissioners in this regard. I agree that the word “similar” is not optimal for this purpose. It is therefore recommended that this wording be changed for “complements,” with modifications proposed for the affected sections accordingly.

**Response to point raised by Kāinga Ora**

13. I make a final note with regard to the character street 6m setback rule queried by Kāinga Ora. I clarify that the identification of the remaining four character streets is not solely about maintaining the physical health of mature trees. Rather, as set out in the Lifescapes Report criteria –

1. Streets should have a historical significance to the establishment and development of the town,

2. Streets should display historically-derived physical and visual characteristics that collectively illustrate part of the town's story and identity, including a majority of the following elements:
    - a) Long vistas that relate to the early town plan grid layout,
    - b) Large-specimen mature trees that form generally continuous avenues down the length of the street,
    - c) Historically-derived features of berms and footpaths,
    - d) A housing stock that contains late 19<sup>th</sup> – mid-20<sup>th</sup> century houses that are appreciable from the public realm and give historical context to the street,
    - e) A regular rhythm of housing setback from the street, with a minimum setback of approximately 6m, allowing for mature gardens in front yards, and
    - f) Unusual examples in their urban context, and
    - g) The above characteristics are generally continuous the full length of the street.
  3. MDRS-level developments within 1.5m of the front boundary (as enabled by the MDRS) would have a detrimental effect on identified collective qualities.
14. Also in the Lifescapes report are street-specific assessments against the question, "Is there a need for a setback provision?" which are useful to consider. See the Lifescapes report regarding Hamilton Road (p.39), Victoria Street (p.42), Hall Street (p.51), and College Street, TA (pp.53/54). I note that several streets did not make this bar, including Thornton Road (p.44), Princes Street (p.45) and Bryce Street (p.47).

**Carolyn Hill**  
**Dated 2 May 2023**