

BEFORE THE COMMISSIONER

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF Proposed Plan Change 7 to the
Ashburton District Plan

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ANNE ELEANOR WILKINS
(LANDSCAPE)
For CONISTON PARK LIMITED**

Dated 1 December 2025

INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Anne Eleanor Wilkins. I am the Principal Landscape Architect at Novo Group.
2. I hold a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (Hons) and I am a Registered Landscape Architect of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (the NZILA).
3. I have over 18 years' experience in landscape architecture and urban design. During this time, I have undertaken urban, landscape and visual effects assessments across a broad range of project areas across New Zealand, including subdivisions, commercial developments, infrastructure, coastal works, marina developments, sport and park spaces, reserves, transmission lines, road projects and housing developments, for a wide range of clients including development groups and local authorities. I have experience in providing landscape and visual and urban design effects assessments for developments of a residential and mixed-use nature, evaluating urban fabric, landscape suitability and interfaces with existing and surrounding land uses, working on behalf of both applicants and councils. I have written Urban Design reports for numerous complex and detailed projects, including Plan Changes and re-zoning proposals across New Zealand, and have presented Evidence regarding Urban Design and Landscape Architecture matters at Hearings.

Code of Conduct

4. Although this is a Council hearing, I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses (contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023) and I agree to comply with it. Except where I state that I rely on the evidence of another person, I confirm that the issues addressed in this statement of evidence are within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from my expressed opinions. My qualifications as an expert are set out above.
5. In preparing my evidence, I have reviewed:
 - (a) The submissions and further submissions.
 - (b) The relevant provisions of the District Plan.
 - (c) The s.42A report prepared by the Council officers.

Scope of Evidence

6. I was engaged and provided the 'Masterplan and Urban Design: Coniston Park' package dated 2023 for the proposal (Plan Change 7). This document outlined the environmental

context, the site and the proposal including the masterplan and layout, and design guidelines for planting.

7. I have been engaged to provide Urban Design expert evidence in extension to this. Specifically, I have been asked to present my review of the submissions and a response to the Officers Report.
8. I have visited the site several times during the development of the Urban Design included in the Application. Additionally, I undertook another site visit on November 26th, 2025, upon review of the submissions and the officers report.

PROPOSAL

9. The proposal allows for Plan Change 7 which seeks to rezone 16.32ha of land located on the corner of Farm Road and Racecourse Road, from Residential D to Residential C.
10. The Plan Change application included an Outline Development Plan (ODP). Following review of the submissions, the ODP has been revised, and is attached in **Appendix 1** following. Overall, I endorse these changes in relation to Urban Design matters. The relevant changes which have been made include:
 - i. The margins of the Wakanui esplanade reserve are to be landscaped with indigenous plantings as per AEL feedback (shown on the plan views and the cross section general notes).
 - ii. Notes added regarding the final sizing of the stormwater management areas are subject to detailed design.
 - iii. Adaption of linkage reserve spaces to allow for flexibility of use i.e. a future road connection or green open space link.
 - iv. The two linkage corridors to land west of the proposed development depicted. Relocation of the northwestern corner reserve link further west to increase connectivity and in response to submissions to provide for an additional future road connection to the Residential D Zone west of the site (see **Submissions** following).

URBAN DESIGN SUMMARY

11. Overall, as noted the ODP was developed in coordination with the outcomes of the urban design masterplan. In this way, the layout of the proposal has been informed throughout its development by urban design inputs to ensure high-quality outcomes. The design responds to the principles of the 'seven Cs' as endorsed by the New

Zealand Urban Design Protocol, ensuring that the proposed urban form is contextually appropriate, connected, and coherent.

12. The proposal also reflects a forward-looking approach to growth within an area of remaining residential land available in Ashburton. It aligns with the Urban Design Principles of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, which encourages well-functioning and efficient urban environments. The site is particularly well-suited to medium-density residential development due to its location on the town fringe, its proximity to essential services, and its ability to integrate with existing transport and servicing networks. Providing a mix of allotment sizes supports greater housing choice and enables more efficient use of land compared with a lower-density Residential D zoning.
13. The internal circulation pattern demonstrates the ability to deliver a well-connected and legible street network that supports multiple modes of transport. The layout incorporates additional walking and cycling connections through green spaces, improving permeability and encouraging active transport. Future residents will benefit from strong connectivity to local destinations, with safe and convenient routes for walking and cycling throughout the neighbourhood.
14. It is anticipated that this site will transition to residential use in accordance with the current zoning. The ODP provides for high-quality built environments, landscaping, and streetscape outcomes to ensure there will be no adverse visual amenity effects arising from the increased density. From an urban design perspective, the proposed street layout, green links, and open spaces will enhance permeability and promote active transport, while landscaping and planting will soften the urban form and maintain a sense of openness. Collectively, these interventions will help integrate the development with the surrounding context, provide high-quality public and private realm outcomes, consistent with best-practice urban design principles.
15. As per the Application for the Plan Change, I consider the ODP and zoning proposed to be generally consistent with the urban design related objectives and policies, specifically 4.1, 4.2, 9.2, of the District Plan. Overall, I consider the Plan Change to be appropriate from an Urban Design perspective.

RESPONSE TO OFFICERS REPORT

16. Overall, I agree with the findings of the Officers Report (paragraph 139) that the proposal is consistent with and will assist in giving effect to the NPS-UD.

17. The Report has addressed considerations regarding open space, and the ODP has been updated to incorporate open space adjacent to Wakanui Creek. I support these updates as they contribute positively to landscape and urban design outcomes. I concur with the Report's conclusion that the provision of open space complies with District Plan policies, ensuring that such areas are suitably located, appropriately sized, and shaped to function as recreational reserves that serve the needs of future residents. From an urban design perspective, these open spaces play a key role in enhancing connectivity, providing visual and spatial relief within the residential environment, and supporting an overall well-structured, attractive, and functional neighbourhood.
18. The Report identifies the potential for reverse sensitivity effects (paragraphs 100–107) and suggests mitigation approaches. I consider that the combination of the 1.8 metre fence along the northern boundary, and the nature and current use of the adjoining rural activity, provides an effective solution to address these concerns at the Plan Change stage. Given this, I am satisfied that the potential for reverse sensitivity can be appropriately managed at this stage without requiring additional mitigation. I also agree with the Report's finding that detailed lot outcomes, such as size, setbacks, and building orientation, are better addressed at subdivision, as prescribing them in the ODP would be unnecessarily restrictive.

SUBMISSIONS

19. Five submissions were received in response to the proposal of relevance to urban design outcomes. In relation to urban design specifically (noting that access, flooding and stormwater management, and construction effects fall outside the scope of this evidence), submitters' comments largely relate to the perceived loss of rural outlook and amenity. I discuss these issues in more detail below.
20. The submission from **Judith Anthea Kingsbury (13 Country Place)** objects to the rezoning and subdivision, loss of rural views, and increased housing density. The submission from **Gloria June Barrett (11 Country Place)** objects to the rezoning and subdivision, citing concerns about loss of rural outlook, and increased noise and light
21. In response, I note the importance of considering the context of the anticipated residential environment at this site. A shift in views and local character is expected given the current zoning provisions, and an adaptation to a residential outlook is an inherent part of this transition. Accordingly, rural character should not form the basis for assessing visual amenity values under *Te Tangi a te Manu* (NZILA guidelines). While an increase in development intensity will occur, this will be balanced by the substantial open spaces provided through the proposed green links, stormwater management

areas, and the delivery of high-quality streetscapes and reserves anticipated in the ODP. Collectively, I find these elements contribute to a visually coherent residential environment in alignment with urban design principles. This aligns with the findings of the Officers Report (paragraph 77) that notes the current amenity derived from the Site by adjoining landowners results from the current land use; not from the development anticipated under the current (Residential D) zoning.

22. The submission from **David and Hilary Ward (80 Carters Road and 124 Farm Road)** seeks height limits on dwellings to preserve open space and views.
23. In response, I do not consider it necessary to reduce the proposed building height limits to mitigate the effects associated with the increased density. Built forms of this scale, and indeed forms exceeding the proposed height, are already anticipated within this zone. The height provisions are therefore consistent with the expected character and intensity of development at this location, and in my view do not give rise to unreasonable visual or amenity effect. This aligns with the findings of the Officers Report (paragraph 78) that notes the rezoning would already result in a reduction of the height limit, from 10m (under Residential D) to 8m (as per Rule 4.9.3.a) and that a further reduced limit would result in bespoke limits applying to this site that do not apply in any other Residential C area.
24. The submission from **Greg and Rachael Tait (102 Farm Road)** raises concerns about two-storey houses, fencing, and roadside use, and requests that these issues be addressed in the zoning rules if the proposal proceeds.
25. In response, the proposed dwelling heights and fencing treatments are consistent with those anticipated under the District Plan and do not introduce any additional or unanticipated visual effects. These elements align with the expected built form outcomes for residential environments of this type, and in my view will integrate appropriately within the future neighbourhood character without generating adverse visual or amenity impacts. This aligns with the findings of the Officers Report (paragraph 79) that notes fencing heights should be as per the Residential zoning requirements. I also agree that larger size lots are not required to be located along the road boundary (Officers Report paragraph 80).
26. The submission from the **DG & CM Williamson Settlement Trust (30 Methven Highway)** raised concerns about potential increases in road circulation to the northwest.

27. In response, provision for a future road connection in this location has been incorporated into the revised ODP. I support this amendment, as it provides a positive outcome for overall connectivity and appropriately addresses the submitter's concerns. From an urban design perspective, the additional road connection strengthens the overall movement network, improves permeability, and supports a more coherent and legible block structure for future development.

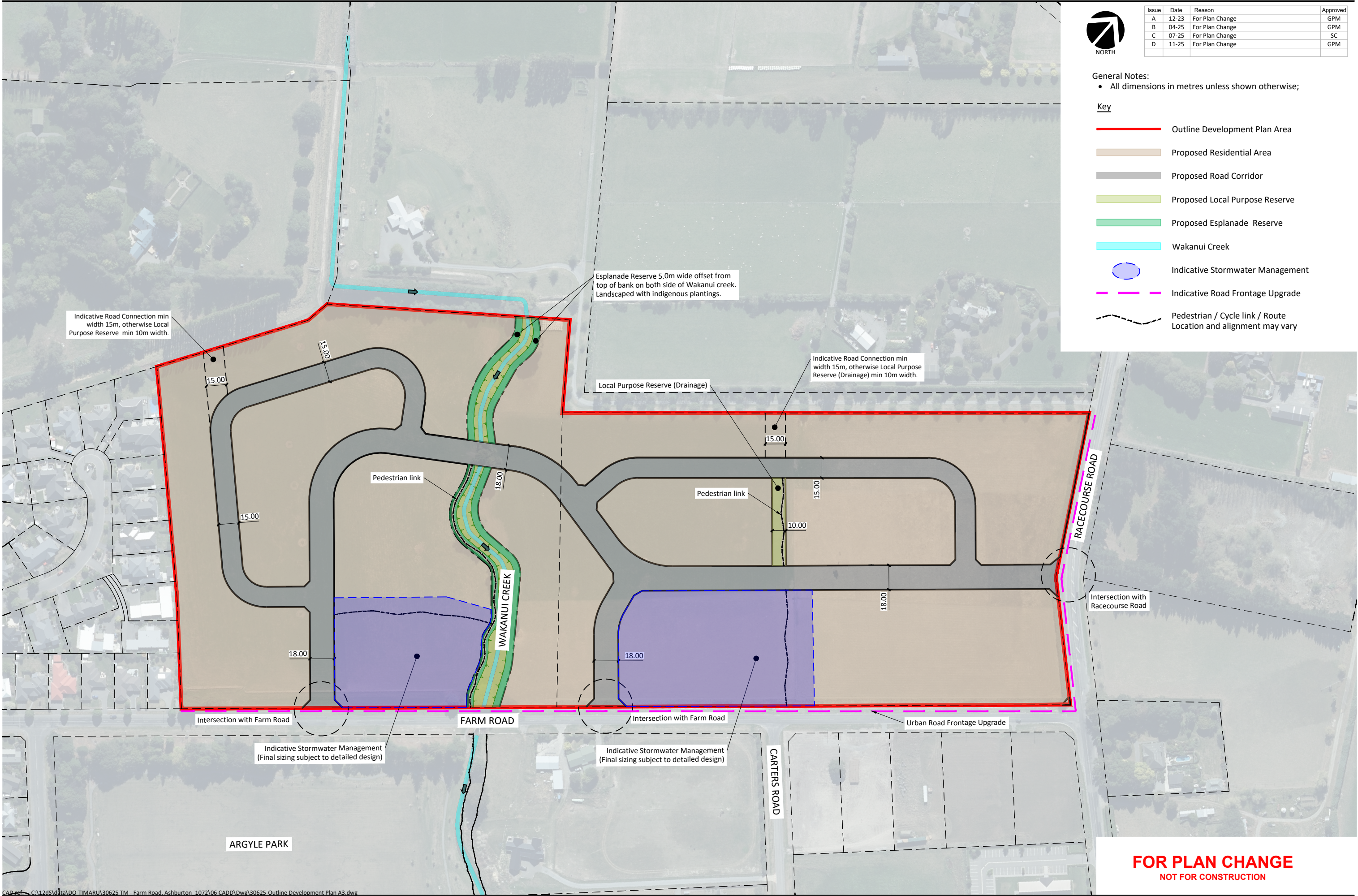
CONCLUSION


28. Overall, the proposal has been developed and designed in accordance with established urban design principles, taking into account the residential zoning of this site as well as the character and function of surrounding land uses and open spaces. The design reflects the objectives of the Urban Development Strategy (UDS), aligns with the broader urban design principles set out in the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol, and complies with the relevant provisions of the District Plan. Collectively, these measures ensure that the development will integrate effectively with its context and contribute to a high-quality, well-structured residential environment.

Anne Wilkins

1 December 2025

ATTACHMENT 1: REVISED OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN





NORTH

Issue	Date	Reason	Approved
A	12-23	For Plan Change	GPM
B	04-25	For Plan Change	GPM
C	07-25	For Plan Change	SC
D	11-25	For Plan Change	GPM

General Notes:

- All dimensions in metres unless shown otherwise;

Key

- Outline Development Plan Area
- Proposed Residential Area
- Proposed Road Corridor
- Proposed Local Purpose Reserve
- Proposed Esplanade Reserve
- Wakanui Creek
- Indicative Stormwater Management
- Indicative Road Frontage Upgrade
- Pedestrian / Cycle link / Route
Location and alignment may vary