

**IN THE MATTER**

of the Resource Management Act 1991  
(RMA or the Act)

**BETWEEN**

**CN Top Ltd, Lexus Trustees 11 Ltd and  
Rajasingham Family Trust.**

**AND**

**Taupō District Council**

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MORNÉ HUGO  
ON BEHALF OF TAUPŌ DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**05 OCTOBER 2021**

**(URBAN DESIGN)**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. My name is **Morné Hugo**.
2. My evidence is given on behalf of the Taupō District Council (TDC) in a review capacity in relation to an application filed by the proprietors of CN Top Ltd, Lexus Trustees 11 Ltd and Rajasingham Family Trust (the Applicant) seeking a private plan change (**PPC37**) pursuant to Section 73(2) of the RMA 1991 (the Application). My evidence relates to urban design effects of the Proposal.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

3. I am a Landscape Architect and Urban Designer, and Associate Partner, of the firm Boffa Miskell Limited (**BML**), a multi-disciplinary company with expertise in planning, landscape architecture, urban design, ecology, landscape planning, cultural heritage, graphics, and mapping.
4. I have been with Boffa Miskell Limited since 2007. I am experienced in the areas of landscape architecture and urban design. I have given expert witness evidence in this area of expertise before numerous City and District Councils.
5. I hold a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture, with Urban Design (Honours) from the University of Pretoria (South Africa, 1994) and I am a Registered Landscape Architect with the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.
6. I have considerable experience assisting Council's in the peer review of applications. I have over 25 years of experience as a consulting landscape architect and urban designer working on projects of varying scales and complexity including structure planning, master planning, urban design advice and assessment, and detail design and project management.

## MY ROLE

7. I have been asked by Council to carry out a review of the proposed plan change (PPC) application from an urban design perspective. In order to do this, I reviewed the proposed development structure plan and supporting technical documentation, including *Appendix G: Nukuhau Private Plan Change Landscape and Visual Assessment & Urban Design Assessment*, which covers Landscape, Visual Effects and Urban Design matters relating to the application.
8. I have also reviewed the Proposed Plan Change 37 wording, submissions and further submissions received relating to the PPC, as provided by Council.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

9. I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses, contained in the Environment Court Consolidated Practice Note (2014) and I agree to comply with it. I can confirm that the issues addressed in this statement are within my area of expertise and that in preparing my evidence I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.
10. As a Registered Landscape Architect, I am also bound by the NZILA<sup>1</sup>'s code of ethics.

## SCOPE OF EVIDENCE.

11. This statement of evidence covers the following:
  - (a) [A summary of my evidence \(Executive Summary\);](#)
  - (b) [Statutory Context;](#)

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects

- (c) [Technical Review](#) of the application, in particular comments on the urban design effects assessment of the Application;
- (d) [Submissions, and](#)
- (e) [Conclusion](#).

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 12. The intention of the Proposed Plan Change (PPC) is to rezone 77.78 hectares of land and enable residential development for approximately 800 new residential lots, a small commercial area, and areas of open space, the latter principally centred around a gully system.
- 13. The PPC also includes the notification for the future re-routing and therefore revoking of an area of existing Road Reserve, being part of Poihipi Road, at the applicable time.
- 14. I was engaged, by Taupō District Council, to review the Urban Design effects of the plan change application. Following my review of the information provided, I concluded that I am in general agreement with the urban design approach and overall outcomes proposed by the applicant for the future development of the proposed plan change area.
- 15. As such I support the proposed plan change application from an Urban Design perspective, subject to the appropriate level of control as proposed by the applicant and a higher level of detail to be provided at future design and consenting stages of the development parcels.

## **STATUTORY CONTEXT**

- 16. The following policy documents are of relevance to the proposed plan change site:
  - The Operative Taupō District Plan;

- Taupō Urban Structure Plan (2004);
- Landscape Types and Units of the Taupō District (2000); and
- Outstanding and Amenity Landscapes of the Taupō District (Isthmus, 2009).

Taupō District 2050 – Taupō's growth strategy

17. These policy documents provide a rule framework and guidance to the outcomes sought by Council for the development of the existing rural and residential environment in Taupō District. They are intended to guide appropriate development of valuable land resources in the region and provide guidance of the appropriateness of development, in particular the preservation of the landscape, natural character and visual amenity values of the landscape is of importance.
18. Further to the above-mentioned policy documents, further urban design guidance is provided at a national level by the *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (NZUDP)*. The NZUDP provides a platform to make New Zealand towns and cities more successful through quality urban design. It is part of the Government's Sustainable Development Programme of Action and Urban Affairs portfolio.
19. Urban design seeks to ensure that the design of buildings, places, spaces, and networks that make up our towns and cities, work for all of us, both now and in the future.

#### **TECHNICAL REVIEW OF SUPPLIED TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT – URBAN DESIGN**

20. As mentioned above, I have reviewed both the *Nukuhau Private Plan Change Landscape and Visual Assessment* report, as well as the *Nukuhau Private Plan Change Urban Design Assessment (UDA)* report, both compiled by WSP.
21. I have also reviewed the proposed *Nukuhau Structure Plan (Revision O)*, dated 14/06/2021.

22. I agree with the applicant's Urban Designer that both Landscape and Visual, and Urban Design matters are inextricably linked on a development of this type, and therefore there is substantial overlap between the two assessment reports provided
23. I have however focussed my review on Urban Design related matters as much as possible.
24. The applicant's urban designer identifies key urban design principles that inform the development of the overall structure plan. These principles broadly align with the outcomes sought by the *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol*.
25. The key principles identified are:
- *Environmental custodianship (respect for landscape, flora, fauna and use of low impact design, encouraged passive surveillance, feelings of ownership).*
  - *Character and sense of place (responds to unique features, physical and cultural, and to intended land use) and Sense of 'Place' to be established and reinforced throughout.*
  - *Open Space and Recreation (green open space).*
  - *Connectivity (movement, visual).*
  - *Comfort and Safety (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), passive surveillance, custodianship, line-of-site, legibility, concealment opportunities, defensible space).*
  - *Collaboration, insofar as the ability to facilitate greater opportunity for collaboration in subsequent phases of design, for example to appropriately incorporate or reference heritage features.*
26. I consider that these key principles, specific design responses and recommendations from the applicant's UDA are appropriate within the context of the Nukuhau PPC area and can be applied moving forward from structure planning through to detailed development layout and implementation phases.
27. The urban design philosophy for the site, which as described in the UDA, aims at delivering a subdivision that 'respects and largely works with the

landscape to deliver local amenity, a sense of 'place' and unique local identity. I agree that this design philosophy is appropriate within the context of the PPC site and will support positive development outcomes for the site if it is followed through all development stages.

28. A key physical feature of the site are the natural gully areas, in particular the larger gully area running north to south through the western PPC area. The intention of the urban design framework is to maintain the deeper gully areas and use these for movement, amenity corridors and view shafts towards the lake. This is proposed to be achieved through:
  - (a) Utilising existing gullies to deliver open space with a parkland character;
  - (b) Location of Medium Density Residential adjacent to open space networks for amenity and access benefits; and
  - (c) Aligning open space corridors with view shafts to key landscape features
29. The intention of the UDA is to also front these gully corridors with road corridors to gain amenity benefits and enhance CPTED outcomes. Whilst this is indicated in the wording of the UDA it does not appear clearly as a design outcome on the Structure Plan drawing itself, which does not show roads fronting any of the open space corridors. We would recommend that the Structure Plan be updated to reflect this intended outcome, or appropriate wording be incorporated into the ODP.
30. The UDA proposes a connected off-road walking and cycling network to be established running alongside roads and green areas. I agree that this is a desired outcome of the proposed design of the development and is critical in providing choices of non-vehicular transportation to future residents. Space allocation for a cycle or shared path network through the stormwater gully areas is essential and will affect developable residential land parcels.



31. In my view the current structure plan layout, does not clearly indicate how this is achieved along the stormwater gully edges and should establish and clearly indicate appropriate setback area between the gullies and proposed residential land parcels for this function to occur. Greater precision (effectiveness) would be achieved through the following:
- (a) Clearly indicating space allocation and alignment of off-road cycleway / walkway connections on the structure plan diagram.
32. I would further suggest that the structure plan should more clearly indicate how the secondary road networks will function within the structure plan area, and specifically show locations where road frontages will run along gully areas, thereby avoiding future subdivision design layouts where gullies become an unsafe, 'back-of-house' feature with no reserve road frontages. I would consider this urban design best-practice and integral to successful subdivision outcomes. The rule framework should include a requirement that a portion of the road network fronts onto the stormwater gully system. This requirement should also clearly be demonstrated on the structure plan diagram. I would propose a rule requiring 30% of the total length of stormwater reserve edges to have active road frontage.
33. The UDA and LVA propose a series of typical streetscape typologies for the development that aim to deliver on the more overarching urban design and landscape philosophy for the PPC site.
34. I have reviewed the proposed streetscape typologies and find them to be appropriate for a development of this type. I do note however that Section 6: Low Volume Road – General density (19m) does not include any proposed trees in the berm areas. This is in my opinion an omission and I would propose that trees be added to this typology.

## **SUBMISSIONS**

35. Submission 17 (17.12). The Submitter opposes the proposal based on lack of recreation facilities to complement the existing natural and cultural

features provided by the area. In my view this is a wider level of service issue for Council as to the appropriate locations for active reserves, destination playgrounds and neighbourhood playgrounds. In my view a residential area of the size proposed should at minimum incorporate neighbourhood playgrounds within a 450m radius walking catchment, and within proximity to medium density residential areas which require a higher level of service in terms of recreational amenity.

36. Submission 18 (18.14) proposes that off street parking, driveways and garages should be adequate. It further proposes centralised shared driveways down the back of medium density developments so that the roadways maintain more community open space and character. I agree with the outcomes sought by this submission and propose that this approach should be adopted during the detailed design of medium density residential areas. To safeguard these outcomes the recommended method would be that an urban design guide to be developed as part of the detailed design and approval stage of medium density housing components within the PPC area.
37. Submission 19 (19.2) proposes the requirement that additional reserve areas are provided other than the stormwater gully areas. I support this submission and understand that Council has provided the applicant with a calculation for additional reserve space as per below:

*To identify an appropriate rate for the acquisition of suitable land the following approach is recommended:*

- A 300m radial area covers a 28.3ha area
- 9000m<sup>2</sup> of reserve is envisaged to be required (being nominally a neighbourhood of approximately 7000m<sup>2</sup> plus pathways from one side to the other with a nominal 5m width (400x5)) within each service catchment, accepting that there may also be wider connectivity that comes from other local purpose/infrastructure reserves not within this area, or a realignment between the land required for pathways, and the size of a neighbourhood reserve)
- An analysis that generally 20% of any service catchment will likely be made up in roads or other LP reserve/gully networks), leaving 22.6ha for residential properties
- $9000/22.6ha = 3.98\%$  of the developable service catchment is likely required for reserves serving the recreational needs of that community

Received by email from Hilary Samuel on 8/6/2021

This is an important to ensure appropriate levels of service in terms of functional and usable open space is provided, over and above visual

amenity and circulation functions that are provided within the stormwater reserve networks.

## CONCLUSIONS

38. I agree with the UDA conclusion that the PPC area is not likely to have any significant adverse or negative urban design impacts on the existing Nukuhau urban area.
39. I further also agree that if the structure plan area is developed as proposed with appropriate mitigation and duty of care to ensure that the desired urban design outcomes are maintained through the life of the development. In my view the UDA will appropriately guide the change in amenity from the current rural land use to a residential and urban amenity outcome that is appropriate for the site context and be cohesive with the existing urban character and amenity of Taupō.
40. As such I support the proposed plan change application from an Urban Design perspective, subject to the appropriate level of control as proposed by the applicant and a higher level of detail to be provided at future design and consenting stages of the development parcels. Further information will need to include:
  - Detailed subdivision layout plans;
  - Detailed planting plans for all streetscape, reserve and stormwater corridors;
  - Design details for any playground areas where relevant, including sign-off in accordance with the New Zealand Playground Safety Standards;
  - Appropriate hard and soft landscaping specifications for all areas listed above;
  - All landscape design works should be carried out by a NZLA Registered Landscape Architect.

**Morné Hugo**

**5 October 2021**

