

Request Response

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REGISTERED
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECT

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Council request

“...comment or recommendations regarding the gross floor area of buildings on the proposed lots. Given that the permitted maximum gross ground floor area of a single building in the Rural Zone under the Operative Buller District Plan is 500m2, and there are no site coverage restrictions, please provide comment from Mr Carter as to whether he considers any restrictions on combined or individual gross floor area of buildings is necessary.”¹

Proposal

A volunteered consent notice will restrict development to one main residential dwelling and one minor residential dwelling per allotment (BDP 65m2).² The other existing recommended controls are:

Landscape BLAs:

- Designated areas within lots for future buildings based on landscape sensitivity.

Building Controls:

- Maximum building heights (generally 5.5m–6.5m).
- Setbacks from roads and sensitive viewpoints.
- Use of recessive cladding and roof colours.
- Directional/hooded exterior lighting.

Vegetation Management:

- Retention and protection of existing vegetation (areas “a” – “e” & “g”).
- Control over future clearance of native vegetation.

New Planting:

- Approximately 9,500 m. of new planting across 15 specific areas (“i” to “xv”), with priority on mounding to accelerate establishment.
- Landscape Management Plan required for implementation and maintenance (minimum 5 years).

Fencing:

- Restriction to rural style fencing to preserve character.

¹ 8 September 2025

² Report P. 8

Issue

The issue is whether, with the controls recommended, can the landscape absorb building development involving:

- permitted maximum gross ground floor area of a single building in the Rural Zone under the Operative Buller District Plan, which is 500m², and noting that there are no site coverage restrictions, and
- considering the Te Tai o Poutini Plan does not set a maximum size of buildings located within the rural zone.

Connected with the issue is the landscapes capacity to absorb building development without

- i. Reduced rural character because of proposed development that is out-of-keeping with typical rural activities including, reduction in open vistas and natural features relative to the presence of buildings.³
- ii. The reduced rural character is influenced by the extent to which rural amenity and character is maintained by factors including whether buildings and structures that have a bulk and location that is characteristic of rural environment.⁴

The scenario involving a low level of effects is large lots that enable onsite servicing, a mix of activities, dominance of open space and plantings over buildings and appropriate setbacks from property boundaries, to minimize adverse visual effects from public roads and dominance of the natural and cultural setting.⁵

Link to existing assessment

Compatibility between the proposed subdivision and the existing development and the surrounding area is a relevant matter.⁶ Analysis indicates the “Upper Addison Flat” area could sustain partial visibility of 3 – 4 building clusters with otherwise affective visual screening of the wider development, maintenance of the privacy and rural outlook from existing residential buildings and a dominance of open space and plantings over buildings.

The current vegetation and landform mean that development on proposed Geotechnical BLAs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 14 (Fig. 1) will be absorbed into the landscape. Recommended planting areas “i” – “xv” will increase capacity to absorb development consistent with the scenario involving a low level of effect.

³ Report. p.15

⁴ Report p.16

⁵ Report p.17

⁶ Report p.14

Analysis

Aerial photos⁷ were used to analyse development on nine existing properties east of SH67⁸. The aim was to gauge the building areas involved in existing development and the surrounding area and identify total building areas on each property and average dwelling area (m²). The general pattern is buildings clustered around the dwelling. In addition to the dwelling, clusters generally involved a garage and separate shed(s). Median building coverage involving all buildings is 388m². Median dwelling area, discernible from the aerial photo is 172m². These data indicate the building areas on surrounding properties that underpin existing landscape character with which the proposed subdivision should be consistent and compatible.

Recommendation

Based on the analysis and landscape elements on the Site (existing vegetation, landform and set back of proposed development from existing dwellings and the road), the combined gross floor area of buildings per proposed lot should be limited to a maximum of 400m². The limit should be applied to Lots 1, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 15. The remaining lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13 & 14 do not require a limit on coverage due to the absorption capacity in those areas of the Site and factors that limit the extent of building areas such as the pond and associated covenanted area and the additional plantings.

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⁷ TPP GIS

⁸ Report p.14