

BEFORE THE INVERCARGIL CITY COUNCIL

Independent Hearing Panel

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of Plan Change 2: Housing and Code of Practice, Invercargill City Council.

COUNCIL HEARING SUMMARY STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY CHURCH

URBAN DESIGNER

20 May 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is TIMOTHY CHURCH, and I am an URBAN DESIGNER and Partner at Boffa Miskell Limited

1.2 In this matter, I was engaged by Invercargill City Council to provide urban design expert advice, including preparation of s32 Urban Design Technical Report, Urban Design Statement of Evidence appended to the s42A Report and review and publication of the draft Urban Design Considerations for Multi-Dwelling Housing Developments: An urban design guide for resource consent.

2.0 REVIEW OF SUBMITTER EVIDENCE

2.1 I have reviewed and considered the relevant statements of evidence by submitters, including:

- Ms Beneke, Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities
- Ms McLaughlin, Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand; and
- Mr Clarke, in his personal capacity as an Invercargill Resident.

2.2 On the outstanding urban design related issues raised, my opinions have not changed from those expressed in my statement of evidence. Nonetheless, there are a few points of clarification I want to make in response to the remaining issues raised in their evidence.

3.0 RESPONSES TO SUBMITTER EVIDENCE

Objective RES1Z-O5

3.1 Regarding the evidence presented on the terminology of 'good urban design' versus 'high quality urban design', I have followed up on Mr Clarke's statement of evidence where he references six approved medium density housing consents in the plan change

area (para 12). I requested these from Ms Baxter and she has provided seven recently approved multi-unit resource consents within the Residential 1A Zone, one of which I peer reviewed on behalf of Council.

- 3.2 While these are based on the existing Residential 1A Zone provisions, they were helpful to review at a high-level relative to the urban design related issues raised by Mr Clarke and by other submitters. I will address the other issues next.
- 3.3 In my experience, those reviewed are typical multi-unit residential infill developments at the lower end of the medium-density range, utilising predominantly single storey, compact-detached and duplex housing typologies. They generally provide a functional and affordable housing that addresses the need for smaller dwellings and contribute to the ongoing renewal of the older housing stock in these inner-city neighbourhoods.
- 3.4 However, I do not consider them to be exemplary nationally, nor do they need to be. In my view, achieving the fundamentals of good urban design across large neighbourhoods is enough in this context. For the more enabling provisions proposed under PC2, where more comprehensive developments are anticipated, there will likely be further areas for improvement from an urban design perspective. The proposed provisions, and complementary urban design guide, will be important to make this next incremental step in quality.
- 3.5 Mr Clarke has also queried the locations where I consider 'high quality' urban design should apply. To clarify, I was not referring to other lower density residential zones, instead those with considerably higher public profile, such as the Business 1 Zone. I was the urban designer during the latter stages of the Invercargill Central development and experienced first-hand the level of attention Council had towards ensuring 'high quality' urban design outcomes were achieved around the Esk St retail precinct. I consider this is a more appropriate context for 'high quality' outcomes.

**Residential Density and Number of Residences Per Site
RES1Z-R5 – R6, RES1AZ-R2 – R4 and RES1AZ-R5 – R6**

- 3.6 Regarding Residential Density and Number of Residences Per Site, I am sympathetic with Ms Beneke's opinion where it relates to the Residential 1A Zone. I consider, from an urban design perspective, that the built form standards, along with the number of residences triggering urban design assessment, should be the primary considerations to manage comprehensive medium density developments.
- 3.7 In my experience, these types of intensive development would typically comprise smaller units below a residential density of 200m² per unit, triggering a discretionary activity, which I appreciate may provide less certainty for developers like Kāinga Ora.
- 3.8 I understand there is a balance being sought through Plan Change 2 between providing sufficient capacity and providing for existing residential amenity and neighbourhood character. However, I also consider enabling urban renewal and intensification close to the central city are other important considerations from an urban design perspective.
- 3.9 The benefit of urban renewal has been raised specifically by Ms McLaughlin in her evidence on behalf of Whatu Ora. In my opinion, if there is potential for the residential density rule to discourage urban renewal through intensification, then the reasons providing for the existing residential amenity and neighbourhood character would be a secondary to this. This is consistent with the NPS-UD approach as I understand it.
- 3.10 Nonetheless, I appreciate that it may take some time for developers to adapt their development approaches in response to these new provisions. As such, retaining the residential density rule, using the same matters of discretion, I consider would take a precautionary approach to minimise the most perverse outcomes, along with managing other infrastructure considerations beyond my area of expertise.

Space Around Buildings RES1AZ-R12

- 3.11 Regarding the 1.5m setback rule that Ms Beneke opposes, I agree that 1m side yards are prevalent in medium density zones nationally, particularly with single storey, compact-detached houses. I did not intend these spaces to be primary landscaped areas, but in my experience they can become overly functional, harder and darker spaces that result in fencelines and buildings becoming visually dominant and will likely impact the outlook amenity provided for in other rules.
- 3.12 I acknowledge that provision for garaging may not be applicable to Kāinga Ora. Although, it would apply to more affordable car ports and be enabling for other developers.
- 3.13 Of those recently approved multi-unit resource consents provided by Ms Baxter, it appears that few have proposed buildings this close to the boundary and generally more than 1.5m. Where the proposals have not met this standard, it has been in specific instances, such as dwellings at the rear of the site, and not across the whole development.

Glazing RES1AZ-R28

- 3.14 Regarding the Glazing rule Ms Beneke opposes, I note that the 20% glazing rule is consistent with the national Medium Density Residential Standards and would likely apply to many Kāinga Ora developments nationally.
- 3.15 Of those recently approved multi-unit resource consents provided by Ms Baxter, it appears that they generally exceed the 20% standard. For those that meet the 20% standard, I do not consider the glazing to be excessive. However, I note a few are quite deficient at 8%, 10% and 16% glazing, which would not be regarded as good urban design from my perspective.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 As noted earlier, following my review of submitters evidence relevant to urban design, my opinions have not changed from those expressed in my statement of evidence.

4.2 I am now happy to take your questions.

TIMOTHY CHURCH

URBAN DESIGNER

Boffa Miskell Limited

20 May 2026