

3. VARIATION REQUEST – ST ALBANS RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION

Officer responsible Environmental Services Manager	Author: Juliet Hickford Planner, DDI 371-1631
Corporate Plan Output: City Plan	

The purpose of this report is to advise the committee of recent correspondence received from the St Albans Residents’ Association requesting a variation to the Proposed Christchurch City Plan (Proposed Plan) to rezone the area bound by Canon Street, Caledonian Road, Edgeware Road and Geraldine Street from Living 3 to Living 2 (refer to map 32A attached).

BACKGROUND

The above site was originally zoned Living 2 in the Proposed Plan as notified in 1995. A submission was received from the Canterbury Property Investors’ Association (S2634) requesting that the Living 3 zone be extended north of Canon Street, up to Edgeware Road, between Springfield Road in the west and Geraldine Street in the east. The St Albans Residents’ Association did not put in a further submission against the original submission, as they were not aware of the proposal, and were therefore not involved in the hearings process. Although the summary of submissions was publicly notified as required under the Resource Management Act, the Association claims they were not aware of any issues that directly affected the area.

The officer’s report to the Hearings Committee recommended most of the area for rezoning with the exception of, firstly, Caledonian Road and Springfield Road, which also contains Special Amenity area 29 and, secondly, the block between Manchester Street and Madras Street. These were identified as areas that have a strong Living 2 character, which could be potentially compromised by a Living 3 zoning. The Council decision accepted the submission in part, with the exception of the Caledonian and Springfield Road area, but rezoned the remainder of the block Living 3. The main justification in the decision for rezoning was consistency with the urban consolidation objectives and the character of the area.

Since the Association became aware of the change they have become actively involved in discussions with Council staff and consequently put their concerns in a petition to the Resource Management Committee in September 1999 opposing the Living 3 zoning. It is my understanding that the Committee were not at the time in favour of a variation and that alternatively the Environmental Policy and Planning Unit developed a “non-regulatory” Neighbourhood Plan for the area. The Neighbourhood Plan was completed in 2000 and works towards retaining and enhancing the physical and social character of St Albans.

A formal request for a variation to the Proposed Plan was received in April 2001. Considering the history and strong views of the residents, Council Officers felt it appropriate to put this request to the Committee for further consideration.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

I have undertaken preliminary investigations into the merits of the rezoning request and have undertaken a site visit and am familiar with the area. I have discussed the issue with Josie Schroder and Janet Reeves, urban designers from City Solutions, who were responsible for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The discussions confirm that the area generally contains low density development, with very few developments reaching the potential densities permitted in the Living 3 zone. There are areas with a greater character and lower densities, for example between Manchester Street and Madras Street, where sites mostly contain single dwellings.

The above comments are the outcome of preliminary investigations, and a full Section 32 assessment has not been undertaken at this point. If a variation was investigated this would need to be considered in context with the work already undertaken on the Neighbourhood Plan, which would form one basis for assessing the options under section 32 of the Resource Management Act.

IMPLICATIONS OF INITIATING A VARIATION

City Plan staff are currently committed to resolving references on the Proposed Plan. However, a number of variations which are likely to be non-contentious are also being progressed. Considering current staff commitments, it is likely that this variation would need to be undertaken by an external consultant, resulting in funding implications.

Recommendation: That the Committee support further investigations into a variation to the Proposed Plan in accordance with Section 32 of the Resource Management Act. Such a variation would be notified, subject to the results of the Section 32 work and any necessary consultation, staffing and budgeting availability and the formal approval from this Committee.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the investigations in terms of Section 32 of the Resource Management Act proceed and that consultation take place with potentially affected parties.