

District Plan Submission

F7/79 Boulcott St

Wellington

Hearing Stream 7

21 March 2024

Chair: Robert Schofield

Commissioners: Jane Black

Lyndsay Daysh

Miria Pomare

Proposed development of the Glenside West Valley

Good Morning

Firstly, I would like to thank the panel for allowing me extra time to present my submission.

I am coming from a point of local knowledge having lived in the area for 72 years and spent my teenage years hunting the Johnsonville and Glenside hills, and fishing the streams.

I worked for the current developer first as a real estate agent and then as a partner and sales manager for Harcourts Churton Park.

I currently own a lifestyle property in Glenside, below the proposed high-density development of 80 plus houses.

My concerns are not with the current council or the developer, but with the previous council for issuing and manipulating a development concept and engagement summary in November 2020 which was a self-serving survey, producing falsehoods and statistical data that misled the public.

Historical timeline:

2008 The Northern Reserves Management Plan identifies the Marshall Ridge as being a critical reserve of great importance to the northern suburbs

2018 Wellington City Council (WCC) commissions Boffa Miskall to undertake a structure plan which encompasses the Upper Stebbings and Glenside Valleys.

There were two public meetings which were extensively advertised and well attended.

A representative employed by Boffa Miskell visited the proposed development site and assured us that the proposed development would not encroach on the Western Glenside hills.

2020 A development concept was proposed by WCC which now included Glenside West. This proposal was poorly promoted in the

community, which is shown in the overall engagement response with only 46 responses coming from local residents (35 came from Generation Zero)

This new concept plan now included a residential development on the western Glenside hills which wasn't in the original structure plan for the area.

The town planner also took political license by saying she had visited the site with the Chair of the Glenside Progressive Association, when, in fact, according to our chairperson, a retired police officer, she didn't get out of the car. The town planner also put great emphasis on the response from Generation Zero but when I personally contacted them, they didn't know where Glenside West was.

The last misconception in the town planner's report was in bundling the Stebbings valley and the Glenside valley together.

Stebbing's Valley is highly intensified with residential properties whereas the Glenside Valley is rural with several stands of original native bush and a stream which flows to Porirua Harbour.

2021 -
2023

Site Visits:

- The Hon. Greg O'Connor, MP and Deputy Speaker
- Daran Ponter and Chris Kirk-Burnand, Greater Wellington Regional Council,
- Sean Rush, Wellington City Councilor 2019 – 2022
- Ben Mc Nulty, Tony Randall and John Apanowicz, current Northern Ward councilors,
- Kate Green, Wellington Post & Radio NZ
- Paul Hendry, Glenside resident
- Barry Blackett Glenside Progressive Association
- Colin Ryder, environmentalist (deceased)
- John McSweeny (formerly WCC)
- Lucy Desrosiers (formerly WCC)

All the above-mentioned have agreed on the undesirability of building over steep gullies and natural springs.

The plans of John McSweeney and Lucy Desrosiers are still included in the current Wellington District Plan.

With the exception of Sean Rush, former Eastern Ward representative, no one from the previous council visited the site after being emailed an invitation to do so.

Our current mayor was notified of the community's concerns. Councilors Paul and Brown responded by email but didn't take up the invitation to visit the site.

Environmental Issues

The first visit to the site was with Paul Hendry and the late Colin Ryder, a well-known Wellington environment and conservation consultant who said that:

"...it would be a recipe for a disaster of great magnitude if building on these hills was permitted."

We were referred to Nigel Clark from Porirua City Council, who advised us that over the previous three-year-period, 40,000 tons of silt were measured in the Glenside/Porirua stream above Takapu Station. He stated that the normal measurement of silt for a stream of that size is *1000-2000 tons per annum*.

Porirua Mayor, Anita Baker also stated that the pollution of the Glenside/Porirua stream was a major concern for Porirua City and local iwi, Ngāti Toa.

The Glenside stream is now slowly starting to recover after years of waste and silt from urban development in its upper reaches.

A member of the Porirua Harbour Trust also voiced concerns about the effects storm water volume from urban development would have on the Porirua Harbour.

The Glenside valley is on the natural flight path from Zealandia heading north and contains a large number of native bird species, including, but not limited to; kāhu, piwakawaka, kererū, korimako, ruru, tui, and kākā.

As mentioned above the Glenside valley has several significant stands of original native bush. I wish to include here an email written by Tim Turnidge of the Northern Community Gardens. Tim regularly collects native Hinau seeds from our property and many other species in the area.

"I represent the Newland (sic) Community Nursery that raises native plants and trees for restoration planting throughout the Wellington region. It is disturbing to hear that part of the area behind Middleton road (sic) is to be opened up for housing development as this whole area represents the natural ecosystem that existed in this area before people settled. We feel that the efforts made by the city council and groups like ourselves are being sacrificed when there are other areas in the vicinity that do not contain valuable bush.

We do use part of the area for seed gathering and feel that loss of places like this would be detrimental to our, and others', efforts and would support any and all efforts to oppose this development as we see it as possibly the initial 'crack in the wall' leading to further expansion in the future."

Community:

I have previously mentioned my concerns about building over gullies and springs; there are also two other issues to consider:

1. Public transport:

Wellington Regional Council has indicated that there will be no public transport to the area under discussion so if we allow an average 1.5 -2 vehicles per household in the new area, the congestion on the existing roads would be unmanageable.

2. Earthquake Risk:

I had the pleasure of showing Jeff Ashby, renowned geologist and Director of Webster Drilling and Exploration Limited, around the site on 28th February this year. Jeff pointed out that as well as the building site being flawed; *if the structural integrity of the water reservoir was compromised then anything in the water's path would be in harm's way.*

A tsunami type effect would destroy homes and native bush, and risk lives. Furthermore, if it wiped out a section of Middleton Road (which we almost saw occur in the floods of 2022) this would seriously

impact people's escape route from the city. It was along Middleton Road, that people walked during the recent Wellington Regional Emergency Management Office (WREMO) Long Walk Home event.

An engineer from Wellington Water told me there is *no overflow plan* for that reservoir on the western Glenside hills.

It would be prudent for Council, if it is going to proceed with this folly, to include the above factors in their LIM reports.

Recommendations

In any dispute you hope there is room for compromise, it is only natural for the developer to want to optimize the return on his land.

I would like to make the following recommendation:

- The planned development for the Glenside West hills be moved over the ridge to the area designated as reserve on the eastern Stebbings hills.

The advantages are:

- Like for like land size – approximately.
- Existing infrastructure nearby e.g. Roads, power. drainage etc.
- Stormwater and natural run-off would flow down to the existing retention dam.
- In the event of a major earthquake and the structural integrity of the water reservoir is compromised, there is a 3-4-metre-high natural bank which would help lessen the impact of the water flow. This bank is not a feature on the Glenside valley side.
- Develop the Glenside hills into small lifestyle blocks which reflect the surrounding environment. This would also give the developer a better return on his investment.

Conclusion

I have seen the damage caused in New Zealand through natural and man-made disasters, and after spending five days in the Hawkes Bay helping out after Cyclone Gabrielle, and helping out with the Kaikoura earthquake efforts at the marae located in Newlands; I would hate to see something similar happening in our community.

Thank you for your time and for listening to my submission.