

Before an Independent Hearing Commissioner at Hurunui District Council

*under:* the Resource Management Act 1991

*in the matter of:* application RC210098 for land use consent to install  
and operate a Gravity-Based Recreation Activity within  
the Conical Hill Reserve, Hanmer Springs

*between:* **Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools & Spa**  
*Applicant*

*and:* **Hurunui District Council**  
*Consent Authority*

Summary of evidence of Simon John de Verteuil (Transport)

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Dated: 7 October 2021

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## **SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF SIMON DE VERTEUIL**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 1 My full name is Simon John de Verteuil.
- 2 I am a Senior Transport Engineer at Novo Group Limited and have worked on traffic planning and engineering projects for 18 years. My experience has largely focussed on development planning and includes the preparation and peer review of Traffic and Transport Assessments associated with resource consent applications.
- 3 My qualifications include a Bachelor of Science (BSc) from Newcastle University and a Master of Geographical Information Science (MSc) from Nottingham University. I am an Incorporated Engineer (IEng) with the Institution of Civil Engineers in the UK (MICE) and a Chartered Engineer Technologist with Engineering New Zealand.

### **SUMMARY**

- 4 I conducted a peak parking demand survey on Saturday, 24 April 2021. This coincided with the school holidays and ANZAC day to capture peak trading periods associated with the Hanmer Springs township.
- 5 The minimum spare on-street parking capacity observed was 67 spaces (at 11.30am) across the 3-hour survey period (11:00am-2:00pm). In my opinion, this does not represent an environment that is constrained by existing parking.
- 6 Based on the hourly peak demand of 60 riders, the anticipated hourly parking demand is between 23-34 vehicles. In my opinion, there is sufficient space available to accommodate the peak demand projected for the Flyride proposal.

### **SUBMISSIONS AND SECTION 42A REPORT**

- 7 My Evidence in Chief responds to transport related submissions received on this application and I don't seek to repeat those today, except to note:
  - 7.1 My analysis revealed there is easily sufficient capacity to accommodate any increase in parking associated with the Flyride;
  - 7.2 As noted in the Council Officer's report, my traffic assessment is based on a robust assessment of parking demand;
  - 7.3 There is sufficient carriageway width for a fire appliance to travel along Oregon Heights, Conical Hill Road, Thomas

Hanmer Drive, Chalet Crescent and Acheron Heights when kerbside parking is full; and

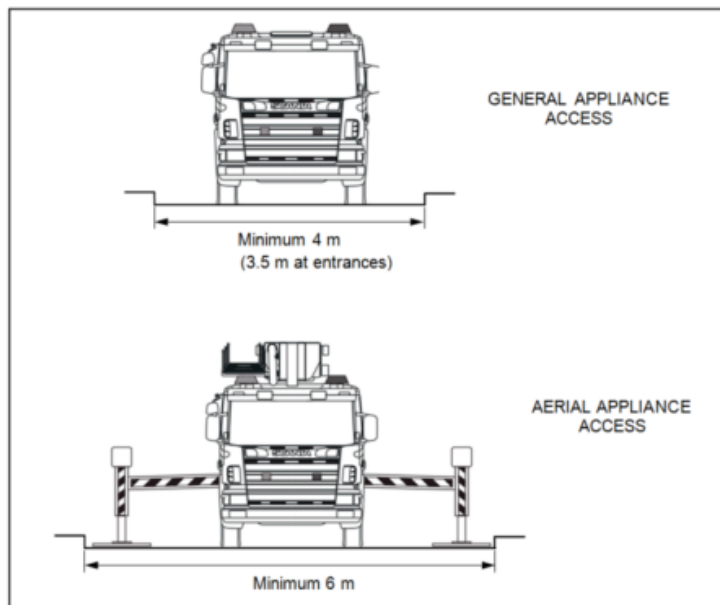
7.4 The level of traffic is unlikely to result in congestion.

- 8 The Council's traffic engineer ultimately supports the proposal and considers that the effects are acceptable subject to five conditions of consent. While I agree with the general thrust of the five conditions, I suggested some refinements that I consider to be more appropriate and practical.

#### **SUBMITTER EVIDENCE**

##### **Fire and Emergency New Zealand**

- 9 Fire and Emergency New Zealand filed a recommendation that if consent is granted, it should include:
- (a) A condition of consent for a Fire Emergency Operations Procedure.
  - (b) Monitoring of parking on Acheron Heights.
  - (c) A 4.0m access gap requirement.
- 10 I support the inclusion of a) and b) and proposed conditions are included in the evidence of Jane Whyte.
- 11 In terms of c), my understanding is that the F5-02 GD Designer's Guide – *Firefighting Operations Emergency Vehicle Access Guide* requires a minimum gap of 3.5m at entrances with 4.0m at the actual fire-fighting location (that is, where vehicle crews are working with firefighting equipment). This is shown in Figure 1 below:



**Figure 1: Minimum carriageway widths along straight sections**

- 12 My understanding is consistent with the Christchurch District Plan which, for the purposes of access for firefighting, requires "vehicle access shall have a minimum formed width of 3.5 metres and a height clearance of 4 metres"<sup>1</sup>.
- 13 Although there is no corresponding rule in the Hurunui District Plan, I suggest that the same principle should apply.

**Raymond Edwards – Friends of Conical Hill**

- 14 I have read and considered the evidence of Raymond Edwards. I make the following comments in response.
- 15 Mr Edwards, the Council Officer's traffic expert (Mr Smith) and myself all agree that parking demand sensitivity tests of 50% and 75% modal split towards private transport are appropriate. We are also all in agreement that no parking related effects identified are fatal to the application. Rather, we consider any effects can be appropriately managed through conditions of consent.
- 16 Mr Edwards states in paragraph 46 that I haven't considered emergency vehicle access. This is incorrect. I addressed emergency vehicle access at paragraphs 34-37 of my Evidence in Chief.
- 17 At paragraph 29 Mr Edwards highlights differences in our observed parking supply. I used a default parking space of 6.5 metres. As I recorded in my assessment, this length was based on the road

<sup>1</sup> Christchurch District Plan – Appendix 7.5.7 g. Access Design and gradient

length and the average length of a vehicle.<sup>2</sup> There can be some subjectivity in assessment of kerbside parking supply. However, I observed how vehicles parked and reassessed parking supply several times during my parking assessment. I am confident that my assessment of parking supply is very robust.

- 18 Mr Edwards questions the average vehicle occupancy of 2.0 patrons per vehicle and states that no data is provided regarding the vehicle occupancy rate.<sup>3</sup> It is common practice for a traffic assessment to outline assumptions. As the evidence of Graeme Abbot confirms, the average group size visiting the Thermal Pools in April 2021 was 2.75.<sup>4</sup> This means an assumed occupancy of 2.0 patrons per vehicle is high. In addition, Mr Abbot's evidence indicates that inefficiencies are likely to mean that peak demand is likely to be between 50-60 riders (compared to 60 riders per hour). Accordingly, I maintain the view that my parking assessment is robust.
- 19 At paragraph 43 b) Mr Edwards asserts that motorists are likely to park on the south side of Oregon Heights, despite a no-stopping restriction. During my site visit I observed no obstructions of the no-stopping restriction. In my view, this is because parking on the south side of Oregon Heights is illegal.
- 20 Mr Edwards considers the parking survey should have been undertaken across a longer time period, and questions whether there was a high occupancy rate in Hanmer Spring's accommodation at the time of my survey.<sup>5</sup> In my opinion, extending the survey across several weekends is unlikely to have yielded materially different results. I holiday regularly in Hanmer Springs and am familiar with the location, parking and transport network efficiency. My observations whilst visiting are consistent with the results of my parking survey. In addition, I have made contact with the General Manager of Hanmer Holiday Homes, the largest accommodation provider in Hanmer Springs. I am advised that they had an occupancy rate of 98% on the day I undertook my parking survey (174 of 178 short term tenancy properties were occupied).<sup>6</sup> I consider this addresses the concern raised in Mr Edward's evidence.
- 21 Mr Edwards also questions whether my reference to the Thermal Pools having an occupancy rate of 70% of absolute peak demand, and 140% compared to a standard weekend day is accurate.<sup>7</sup> The figures used were based on anticipated data provided to me by the

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<sup>2</sup> Parking Assessment, Appendix 8 to the original resource consent application, at p7.

<sup>3</sup> Evidence of Raymond Edwards at paragraph 37

<sup>4</sup> Evidence of Graeme Abbot at paragraph 78.

<sup>5</sup> Evidence of Raymond Edwards at paragraph 36.

<sup>6</sup> Email from Steve Hutchy to myself, dated 1 October 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Evidence of Raymond Edwards at paragraph 35.

applicant at the time of my assessment. Mr Abbot's summary confirms that the number of visitors to the Thermal Pools on 24 April 2021 was 132% higher than a standard day between August 2020 and July 2021, and that weekend saw 65% higher than average visitor rates when compared to an average weekend. Accordingly, I consider the thermal pools were sufficiently occupied to have no impact on my conclusions reached. As noted by Mr Edwards, thermal pools trading data and accommodation occupancy provide strong indicators of parking demand.

- 22 Mr Edwards states at paragraph 19 of his evidence that I estimate the proposal will generate a parking demand of 23 on a 'regular basis'. This is incorrect. As outlined in both my assessment and evidence, I have assessed the anticipated *peak* demand of the activity against observed kerbside parking demands on a very busy weekend. I used the peak demand to ensure that my parking assessment is conservative. The ridership demand of 50-60 persons is not expected every hour and every day. That is, I have assessed the 'worst case scenario' and it is not expected that there will be a parking demand of 23 on a regular basis.
- 23 At paragraph 19, Mr Edwards also asserts that the most appropriate classification for parking for the Flyride proposal is the 'events' classification.<sup>8</sup> As I mentioned in my Evidence in Chief, I agree with the Council's traffic engineer that the 'turnover' classification is the correct assessment to apply.<sup>9</sup> In my opinion, the proposed activity clearly falls within the 'turnover' category as this applies to "groups of visitors at staggered intervals".
- 24 At paragraph 53 Mr Edwards states that on-street parking will be concentrated at the streets closest to the activity access points and not spread over the entire survey cordon area. I agree with this insofar as it applies to patrons who drive rather than walk to Conical Hill.
- 25 I similarly agree with Mr Edwards that Conical Hill Road and Oregon Heights are the most viable parking resources to cater for parking demand related to the activity.
- 26 Mr Edwards suggests that if on-street parking demand is higher than anticipated then a shuttle bus from the Thermal Pools could be implemented. I agree that this would be an appropriate solution if monitoring of on-street parking shows that parking demand is not performing as expected and further investigations show that such parking demand is attributable to the Flyride. I am confident that the monitoring and review conditions provided in the evidence of

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<sup>8</sup> Evidence of Raymond Edwards at paragraph 19.

<sup>9</sup> Evidence in Chief at paragraph 56.

Jane Whyte will ensure any un-anticipated parking demand is identified and addressed.

27 Mr Edwards considers the proposed traffic monitoring conditions are not precise enough to provide clarity regarding what will be done to measure and, if necessary, mitigate potential on-street parking related effects.<sup>10</sup> I agree with Mr Edwards that further clarity in relation to traffic monitoring would provide residents in the vicinity confidence that any unanticipated effects are identified. I recommend the following amendments to the proposed traffic conditions of consent to address Mr Edwards' concern:

- 27.1 specify that the roads to be monitored are Thomas Hanmer Drive, Oregon Heights, Conical Hill Road (north of Chalet Crescent). These are the streets where we anticipate on-street parking demand associated the Flyride will be most concentrated as they are the closest streets to the access at the base of Conical Hill;
- 27.2 specify the time period over which monitoring should be undertaken. This should be a busy period to assess peak parking demand. I suggest that this be on a school holiday or public holiday weekend, over a four hour period between 10am and 2pm. Parking assessments generally vary between two and four hours, depending on the surveyors knowledge of the site. I recommend specifying a four hour period for the monitoring, to ensure all peak traffic is captured;
- 27.3 require both baseline and annual monitoring be provided to the Council. This will assist with understanding any change on kerbside parking demand attributable to the Flyride on parking;
- 27.4 provide a 'trigger point' for monitoring to require further investigation and, if necessary, mitigation measures. I recommend this be reached if there is occupancy of 85% of on-street parks at each of the locations specified in the monitoring condition. 85% is a recognised threshold whereby parking is considered efficient up to 85% occupancy; and
- 27.5 include a standalone condition requiring monitoring to extend to Acheron Heights, and applying the same 85% threshold outlined above. I consider Acheron Heights should be assessed separately as there is a significant separation in distance between Acheron Heights and the other three streets. In my view, a standalone condition would provide more comfort to residents on Acheron Heights that any

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<sup>10</sup> Evidence of Raymond Edwards at paragraph 66.

parking effects associated with the Flyride will be identified and addressed.

- 28 I conclude that with these amendments to the traffic conditions will be sufficient to provide appropriate monitoring and 'trigger' points for mitigation measures.

#### **COUNCIL S 42A REPORT – SUMMARY BY DAVE SMITH**

- 29 I have reviewed Mr Smith's summary evidence and I have the following comments:
- 29.1 Mr Smith's recommendation regarding parking associated with the activity extending beyond a 150m walk distance, is in my opinion, in agreement with the 5 locations I have proposed for monitoring. These 5 locations are roughly within 150m of the Conical Hill pedestrian entrance. I recommend specifying the five locations rather than a distance, as it provides better clarity as to the locations to be monitored. Mr Smith has not proposed a measurable trigger point for Acheron Heights. As per **paragraph 25.5**, I recommend the recognised threshold of 85% occupancy be used.
- 29.2 I am supportive of a pedestrian crossing being implemented across Conical Hill Road, south of Thomas Hanmer Drive, *if* parking is 'consistent' along Thomas Hanmer Drive, and this is attributable to the Flyride. Again, I recommend the typical threshold of 85% parking occupancy during monitoring for this to be triggered.
- 29.3 I maintain the view that the Council's programmed Conical Hill pedestrian improvements should not be included as a consent condition. The Council has committed to these improvements, and if the works were not completed before the Flyride becomes operational, any potential effects would only be for a short period.
- 29.4 A 2 week period for reporting back monitoring results is a very fast turnaround time, and may not be practical depending on workloads. My opinion is that 4 weeks is a more appropriate preferable timescale.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

- 30 I am comfortable that the level of parking demand and traffic generation expected from the proposal can be accommodated by the surrounding roads without compromising safety or efficiency.
- 31 I am happy to answer any questions concerning my evidence.



Dated: 7 October 2021

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Simon de Verteuil