

RESPONSE TO MINUTE 5 – REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Mt Iron Junction Housing Development Expert Panel [FTAA-2602-1173]

Items 3(c) – Effects on Old Racecourse Road Neighbours, and 3(d) – Urban Design

1. This letter is provided by us, Figure & Ground, on behalf of the Applicant, in response to Minute 5 of the Expert Panel dated 6 July 2026, specifically items 3(c) (Effects on Old Racecourse Road neighbours) and 3(d) (Urban design). This response addresses the architectural design matters raised by the Panel only, and should be read alongside the updated architectural plans accompanying it, which reflect the design changes described below.
2. This response is limited to architectural design matters. It will be accompanied by separate responses from the landscape architects and urban designers addressing the corresponding landscape and urban design aspects of items 3(c) and 3(d). The building design changes described below have been developed in conjunction with, and are intended to be read alongside, corresponding changes to the planting and landscape treatment along the Old Racecourse Road boundary, as will be set out in the landscape architects' response.
3. For the avoidance of doubt, and consistent with the Panel's own framing at Minute 5 [3](c)(ii), the provision of this information is not a concession that the concerns raised by the Old Racecourse Road neighbours, or by Council in respect of urban design, require any condition of consent. Rather, the Applicant has used this request as an opportunity for us to review the design of the affected buildings and, where reasonable and practicable design improvements were identified, to make them. We consider the changes set out below represent a genuine, design-led, least-possible-impact response that directly addresses the substance of the concerns raised.

(c) Effects on Old Racecourse Road neighbours

4. At Minute 5 [3](c)(i)-(ii), the Panel indicated that, were it to agree with the concerns raised by the Old Racecourse Road neighbours regarding amenity and privacy, a response in the order of a 3–4m planted boundary setback might be required, and requested that the Applicant put forward its own view of a least-possible-impact solution. We have accordingly reviewed the layout, typology, and fenestration of every dwelling with a boundary interface to Old Racecourse Road and have made the following changes, in conjunction with corresponding landscape treatment changes described in the landscape architects' accompanying response. As a result of these changes, the Old Racecourse Road boundary now comprises 26 Type A (single-storey) units and 12 Type B (two-storey) units, a mix weighted towards the lower-impact single-storey typology.

Type A units

5. The master bedroom of the Type A unit previously had a doorway and associated glazing facing directly onto the Old Racecourse Road boundary. This door has been removed and the room re-oriented so that the master bedroom now opens onto the private deck rather than the boundary. In its place, a highlight window of 1,500mm width by 600mm height has been installed at a sill height of 1,600mm. Because the window sill sits well above standing eye level, this substantially reduces the potential for both direct overlooking of neighbouring properties and casual visibility between the unit and the boundary, while still providing natural light and ventilation to the room.

6. In conjunction with this change, the walk-in wardrobe previously located in the master bedroom has been removed and replaced with a standard on-wall wardrobe. This has allowed the rear (boundary-facing) wall of the unit to be pulled back by a further 700mm, increasing the setback from the boundary from approximately 1,800mm to 2,500mm. This comes at a cost to internal floor area, of approximately 2.5m² per unit (from 112.17m² to 109.75m²). The combination of the removed sliding door, the re-oriented and reduced glazing, and the increased physical setback is considered to represent a material improvement in the amenity and privacy experienced by adjoining Old Racecourse Road neighbours, achieved through design rather than through a planted buffer. We also note that the main living room glazing in the Type A units is set back roughly 4.5 metres from the boundary, further reducing the potential for overlooking from this part of the unit.

Type B units

7. A corresponding set of changes has been made to the Type B units, which previously had a full-height window facing the boundary. This window has been replaced with the same highlight window specification used in the Type A units – 1,500mm wide by 600mm high, with a 1,600mm sill height. While the total area of glazing on this elevation reduces only slightly, the change in window height and orientation removes the glazing from the standing sightline of occupants, which is considered to meaningfully increase privacy for neighbours notwithstanding the modest change in glazing area.
8. As with the Type A units, the master bedroom walk-in wardrobe has been removed and replaced with an on-wall wardrobe, which has allowed the rear wall to be pulled back a further 700mm and has increased the boundary setback from approximately 1,800mm to 2,500mm. This results in a reduction in unit area of approximately 3.4m² (from 92.22m² to 88.82m²). Taken together with the removal of the full-height glazing, this is considered to represent a significant improvement in amenity and privacy outcomes for the neighbours along this boundary. We also note that the main living room glazing in the Type B units is set back just under 8 metres from the boundary, which further limits the potential for overlooking from this part of the unit.
9. A summary of the changes to both unit types is set out below.

Unit type	Boundary setback (was / now)	Unit area (was / now)	Key glazing change
Type A	1,800mm / 2,500mm	112.17m ² / 109.75m ²	Sliding door + full-height glazing removed; 1500x600mm highlight window (1600mm sill) installed
Type B	1,800mm / 2,500mm	92.22m ² / 88.82m ²	Full-height window removed; 1500x600mm highlight window (1600mm sill) installed

Block 1 / Block 12 typology swap

10. Block 12 is a Type B (two-storey) block located directly opposite 35 Old Racecourse Road, a comparatively new dwelling with no established planting or accessory buildings that might otherwise provide a buffer between it and the proposed development. Recognising the absence of any existing mitigating vegetation or structures at this interface, we have swapped the position of Block 12 with Block 1, a Type A (single-storey) block. This exchanges a two-storey built form for a single-storey built form directly opposite this dwelling, which reduces the potential for overlooking, visual dominance,

and general privacy effects on this neighbour, without altering the overall yield or mix of the development.

Block 30 typology change

11. Block 30 sits directly across the boundary from the Langs' residence at 29 Old Racecourse Road and was previously a Type B (two-storey) block. This has been replaced with a Type A (single-storey) unit. Unlike the Block 1/12 change above, this is not a like-for-like swap with another block elsewhere in the development; rather, the Type B unit at Block 30 has simply been changed to a Type A unit, with no corresponding two-storey unit introduced elsewhere to offset it. As a result, this change represents a net loss of bedrooms across the development as a whole, rather than a redistribution of built form. We consider this loss to be justified given the direct interface with, and the particular circumstances of, this neighbour, which we have distinguished from other residents along Old Racecourse Road on the following basis. In reviewing the boundary as a whole, we observed that most other properties along Old Racecourse Road benefit from some form of existing mitigating buffer between the development and the neighbouring dwelling – whether this be accessory buildings, established trees, hedging, or other vegetation. By contrast, 29 Old Racecourse Road has a comparatively open southern boundary, with no equivalent buffer presently in place, which we consider leaves this dwelling more susceptible to privacy and overlooking effects than other properties along the boundary. It is on this basis that we consider the change at Block 30 – notwithstanding the resulting loss of bedrooms – to be a justified and proportionate response specific to the particular circumstances of this interface, rather than a precedent applicable along the boundary generally. As with the Block 1/12 swap, this reduces the height and bulk of built form presented to this particular neighbour, and is intended to directly address the privacy, overlooking, and visual dominance concerns raised in respect of this interface.

Summary – Section (c)

12. 35 and 29 Old Racecourse Road have been identified as the neighbours most affected by the proposal, and therefore the interfaces of greatest concern, on a consistent basis to that described above in relation to Block 30. While we consider the changes described above will have a positive privacy impact on all dwellings along the Old Racecourse Road boundary, we have had particular regard to the fact that, across the boundary as a whole, most properties are afforded some degree of existing mitigation between themselves and the development, in the form of accessory buildings, established trees, hedging, or other vegetation. 35 and 29 Old Racecourse Road are comparatively lacking in such mitigating factors, leaving these two dwellings more exposed to potential overlooking and privacy effects than other properties along the boundary. It is for this reason that the design changes described above have been targeted specifically at the interfaces with these two properties, rather than applied uniformly along the boundary.
13. We consider that, taken as a package, the changes above – reoriented and reduced glazing, increased physical setbacks of 700mm beyond what was originally proposed, and the strategic use of single-storey typologies at the two identified interfaces of greatest concern (35 and 29 Old Racecourse Road) – together with the corresponding landscape treatment changes set out in the landscape architects' response, represent a proportionate and least-possible-impact response to the concerns raised by the Old Racecourse Road neighbours. This has been achieved without recourse to the more prescriptive planted boundary setback and hedge treatment indicatively described by the Panel at [3](c)(i). We note that, with the exception of the Block 30 change, which represents a net loss of bedrooms as described above, these changes have been achieved without loss of yield elsewhere in

the development. These changes are put forward to assist the Panel's assessment and are not a concession by the Applicant that a condition of consent addressing this matter is necessary; the Applicant, supported by us, remains available to discuss these changes further, including at any limited hearing the Panel may convene on this issue.

(d) Urban design

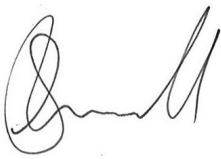
14. At Minute 5 [3](d), the Panel indicated that it was not persuaded by a post-consent certification process for resolving blank end walls and other urban design elevation concerns, and requested that, to the extent the Panel agrees with Council's concerns, updated (even if indicative) end-wall elevations be provided now as part of the consent plans. The relevant elevations giving rise to Council's concerns are those of the apartment blocks. As the architectural designers, our response to this specific design matter is set out below; the urban designers separately address the broader urban design matters raised by Council in their accompanying response.
15. The urban design feedback previously received identified that a number of the apartment facades appeared blank. This design outcome was originally a deliberate response to internal amenity considerations: maximising usable wall space within each apartment for furniture placement and giving residents the ability to personalise their living spaces, while also managing natural light levels. However, we accept that this internal amenity objective can be achieved while also providing a more articulated, higher-quality external elevation, and have revisited the design of the affected apartments accordingly.
16. Updated elevations have been prepared and are included in the plan set accompanying this response, clouded to identify the specific locations of change. In most instances, the additional glazing takes the form of vertical windows approximately 500mm in width. These are sized and positioned to break up otherwise blank sections of facade while preserving sufficient contiguous wall space within each apartment for furniture and personalisation. In a number of other locations, windows have been added above the kitchen bench. In addition to their elevational benefit, these kitchen windows provide a passive surveillance benefit, giving residents a sightline to the street or communal areas from a frequently occupied part of the apartment.
17. We consider that these changes directly respond to the substance of the Council's urban design concerns – namely, the achievement of high-quality building elevations and passive surveillance consistent with the expectations of the Medium Density Residential zone – while doing so now, as indicative elevations forming part of the consent plans, rather than deferring the outcome to an uncertain post-consent certification process. We consider this provides the Panel with a sufficiently clear and certain basis on which a defensible detailed-design or certification condition, if the Panel considers one necessary, could then be constructed.

Conclusion

18. We trust that the above, together with the updated architectural plans accompanying this response, provides the Panel with the further architectural information requested at Minute 5 [3](c) and [3](d). These matters are addressed further in the accompanying responses from the landscape architects and urban designers. The Applicant, supported by us, remains willing to engage further with the Panel, Council, and the Old Racecourse Road neighbours on these matters, including at any limited hearing convened by the Panel, and we would welcome the opportunity to clarify any aspect of the above.

Sam Connell

15 July 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Connell', with a stylized, cursive script.