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# **NORTH THREE PARKS**

## **Ballantyne Road and SH84, Wanaka Assessment of Landscape Character and Values**

in association with

**Proposed Plan Change 4  
Queenstown Lakes District Council**

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**June 2010**

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# **NORTH THREE PARKS**

## **Ballantyne Road and SH84, Wanaka**

### **Assessment of Landscape Character and Values**

A Preliminary Advice Report for Paterson Pitts Partners, Wanaka  
on behalf of Ballantyne Investments Ltd

in association with

**Proposed Plan Change 4**  
**Queenstown Lakes District Council**

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prepared by  
Anne Steven Landscape Architect

June 2010  
Report Ref. ASLA 187/10

*Front cover: View southwest over Proposed Plan Change Site from Mt Iron Reserve, Wanaka*



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# North Three Parks Landscape Assessment Report

ASLA Ltd June 2010

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Objectives and Policies  
Upper Clutha Walking and Cycling Strategy  
2008



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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As part of its Growth Management Strategy for Wanaka<sup>1</sup>, the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) has identified areas for future urban growth on the basin floor south of Mt Iron, between Ballantyne Road and SH84. This is shown in Wanaka's Structure Plan which was adopted by Council in 2007. This land is currently zoned Rural General. A series of plan changes will be required to change the zoning to permit the envisaged urban growth.

A large part of this area has already been subject to a Proposed Plan Change - Plan Change 16: Three Parks Special Zone - which seeks to re-zone around 100ha for a range of urban uses. The hearing and decision<sup>2</sup> on this proposed change was in 2009, resulting in partial approval of the proposed Special Zone. It is currently under appeal.

Between the proposed Three Parks land and Wanaka Golf Course (the existing outer town boundary in this location) and between SH84 and Ballantyne Road is an area of farmland under five separate ownerships. The bulk of the area is owned by Ballantyne Investments Ltd (BIL) covering around 37ha. Four smaller properties complete the area. The Robertson and Gordon-Moseby properties are sited along the SH84 frontage. The Spencer-Bower property is in the southwest corner. A small parcel of land is occupied by the Wanaka Substation along Ballantyne road (Aurora Energy Ltd). In total the area covers 46.8ha.

*Figures 1 and 2* attached show the location of the site, and *Figure 3* shows the ownership and surrounding land use details. The site is called North Three Parks.

BIL in conjunction with QLDC have initiated a Proposed Plan Change 4 process for this area, including the four other owners.

ASLA Ltd has been engaged by Paterson Pitts Wanaka on behalf of Ballantyne Investments to provide a landscape assessment for the site. This technical report will sit alongside other background reports on the ecological, geological and cultural aspects of the site. Together these reports will provide information needed to prepare a preliminary structure plan for the site



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<sup>1</sup> A Growth Management Strategy for the Queenstown Lakes District April 2007

<sup>2</sup> Decision of the Queenstown Lakes District Council on Plan Change 16: Three Parks Special Zone, December 2009

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## **2 PURPOSE OF STUDY**

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The landscape report is to describe and analyse the landscape of the site in its context and to identify its landscape values. It is to report on constraints and opportunities with respect to the proposed urban development and to identify features and characteristics worthy of protection.

Assessment and recommendations are based on the best practice principles in landscape planning and design of promoting integrative and environmentally sustainable design. This includes recognition of those characteristics of the site that contribute most to local character and sense of place as well as those that are inherently of significant value.

## **3 SCOPE OF REPORT**

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The structure of this report is as follows:

- Introduction and Purpose
- Explanation of Assessment Methodology
- Description of Site
- Description of Landscape Character
- Study of Landscape Context (biophysical; cultural; landscape planning context)
- Identifications of Opportunities and Constraints

A separate booklet of figures is attached. All photos in this report were taken by the author in June 2010.

## **4 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

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The methodology used for landscape assessment depends on the purpose of assessment. For this project, the purpose is to identify what landscape features and attributes to inform the design of the future scheme plan.

The assessment is to identify elements and characteristics on the site that are deserving of protection, and to identify opportunities and constraints for future development.

The process applied is as follows:

### **Stage 1 - Site Description to Identify Landscape Attributes**

- Site description (inventory of biophysical features both natural and cultural; with reference to the ecological, geotechnical and cultural reports prepared for this site) with identification of features or phenomena of known significance
- Identification of visual values and other sensory qualities (described in terms of visual coherence, distinctiveness, vividness, legibility and memorability, detracting elements)
- Associative activities and meanings
- Description of surrounding land uses



Stage 2 - Description of site landscape character (spatial analysis of patterns and processes)

Stage 3 - Analysis

- Contextual Study to determine linkages, interconnectedness, and significance of site or site elements including review of relevant landscape planning and policy documents
- Site analysis to Identify Key features and Attributes for Protection and identification of constraints and opportunities for future urban development

## 5 SITE DESCRIPTION

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### 5.1 Biophysical Elements

#### 5.11 Geology and Landform

The site is entirely comprised of depositional glacial and fluvio-glacial landforms overlying basement schist rock.

The geology is broadly classed as Q2t<sup>3</sup> “undifferentiated till” that is “slightly older” than adjacent till (to the west). This geology wraps around the west side of Mt Iron and across the Clutha River to Dublin Bay and runs southwest in a narrowing band towards the Studholme Road area.

Halliday<sup>4</sup> reports the underlying material is predominantly sandy to coarse gravel material consistent with an outwash fluvial environment. Glacial till underlies the outwash material over the northern part of the site, under meltwater channels. Finer silty material overlies outwash gravels in the hollows, derived both from outwash and loess.

The ground surface is generally smooth due to the predominance of gravels, sands and silts. Only two large surface boulders were noted on the site both close to the west boundary. Loess deposition has mantled the weathered landforms, softening them further and infilling the hollows. Humps are visibly stonier, suggesting wind removes the fines, which are deposited in the hollows and on lee slopes.

The terrain is strongly to moderately rolling - ‘hump and hollow’ terrain - to gently undulating and planar (terrace scarp) with a smooth surface. Altitude varies across the site by about 25-30m with the highest terrain generally being in the south end closest to Ballantyne Road and the lowest levels being towards the northern end of the site. Generally the site falls from south to north, and, to a lesser degree, west to east across the northern half.

Four distinct landform types can be identified over the site (*see Figure 4*):

#### 1. Meltwater Channel

The Robertson and Gordon-Moseby properties at the north end lie within a well defined large relict meltwater channel about 300m wide. SH84 enters into Wanaka through this channel, and it extends east as a broad shallow valley towards the Cardrona River through the neighbouring Three Parks land. The southern margin of this meltwater channel is defined by a rolling planar scarp.

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<sup>3</sup> Geology of the Wakatipu Area - I M Turnbull (compiler) IGNS 2000 1:250 000

<sup>4</sup> Geotechnical Investigations for Plan Change - G Halliday Tonkin and Taylor Ltd June 2010 ref. 892097



Meltwater Channel (looking northwest across Gordon-Moseby property). A Steven June 2010

## 2. Outwash Plain

South of the meltwater channel over the northern of the BIL land the terrain is comprised of gently undulating outwash plain, possibly a remnant of an earlier meltwater channel. The land generally falls to the east. A subtle channel can be seen from the contour analysis running west to east. This surface is between 200 and 240m wide. The ground has been levelled to accommodate an airstrip (now disused).

## 3. Kame and Kettle Terrain

The remainder of the BIL land is comprised of "kame and kettle" topography<sup>5</sup> - characterised by humps and hollows. Halliday describes it: "fluvial deposition appears to have occurred in close association with retreating glacial ice from the Mt Iron advance, with kettle hollows forming as a result of the melting buried ice." Much of the terrain is softly rolling with a rather irregular arrangement of forms. Humps are generally no more than 2-5m higher than the floors of the hollows. A particularly prominent steep sided and higher hump lies on the west side at the northern end of this type of terrain, adjacent to the golf course. This does in fact comprise the highest point on the site and is about 9m higher than the undulating outwash terrain immediately adjacent to the north. Within this terrain there is a central irregularly shaped area of low lying flatter land that drains to the north. This terrain type extends east through the Three Parks land.

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<sup>5</sup> ref Halliday report



View east over Outwash Surface from high point on BIL land. A Steven June 2010



Typical Kame and Kettle Terrain (looking east across BIL land) A Steven June 2010





Terminal Moraine, looking southeast across Spencer-Bower Property.

A Steven June 2010

#### 4. Terminal Moraine

The western corner of the property (Spencer-Bower) is more strongly defined steeper hummocky terrain with deeper hollows which is interpreted as being part of the terminal moraine of the Hawea advance. This terrain extends south of Ballantyne Road (as far east as Gordon Road) and through the golf course towards Anderson Road and towards the town. To the southwest, the moraine area is synonymous with the Wanaka Golf Course at least as far as McDougall Street.

There is no distinct visible boundary with the kame and kettle topography. The presence of surface boulders is one indication and, with excavation, the presence of till.

There does not appear to be any significance attached to the landforms and they are not listed in the Otago Geopreservation Inventory<sup>6</sup>. The individual forms and composite pattern of the four landform types is highly legible due to the predominant low stature cover.

#### 5.12 Water Features and Drainage

There are no water bodies on the site although there is an obvious damp area at the bottom of the deep hollow on the Spencer-Bower property. Subtle relict channels can be defined on the outwash. In places drainage is internal, into hollows. There may be some temporary ponding in these due to presence of fines. These hollows are marked on *Figure 4*.

The geotechnical investigation indicates the underlying geology highly pervious and likely to be uniformly free draining. Halliday reports the water table is likely to be 15-20m deep.

<sup>6</sup> Inventory and Maps of Important Geological Sites and Landforms in the Otago Region - eds. B W Hayward and J A Kenny GSNZ Misc. Pub. 99 First Ed. 1998



A natural hollow on the BIL land at the north end of the outwash surface,

A Steven June 2010.

### 5.13 Soils

A description of the soils is given in the ecological report<sup>7</sup>. What can be noted here is that they tend to be light and sandy with low clay and organic content. They drain well and are moderately fertile.

Soils were observed to be thin and stony on top of some of the hummocks where the wind has most likely blown off soil, although the geotech test pits 2, 3 and 7 showed 300mm of topsoil (refer G Halliday report). There appears to be deeper soils derived from loess in part in the hollows with Halliday's test pits recording 400mm loess deposits.

### 5.14 Land Use and Land Cover

The land use of the site historically has been pastoral (sheep, deer, horses) and residential garden. There are four dwellings each with garden and outbuildings including barns and stock yards.

The BIL property is by far the largest and has the appearance of a working farm. The Gordon-Moseby, Robertson and Spencer-Bower properties are lifestyle blocks.

Pasture is uniformly very short and over the BIL block appears overgrazed and of low value. Rabbits were observed to be prolific with large warrens on the hummocks.

Almost all vegetation observed is exotic, as noted in the Ecological Report.

#### Native Vegetation

One *Carex breviculmis* was observed in the turf on the BIL land, as well as mosses and lichens generally. Two porcupine shrubs (*Melicactus alpinus*) were observed draped over the only two boulders found on the site. These are identified on *Figures 5 and 6*.

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<sup>7</sup> Part 4.1.2 Investigation for a Potential Plan Change – Three Parks North, Ballantyne Road, Wanaka – Assessment of Ecological Values - Natural Solutions for Nature Ltd, (D Palmer) Contract Report: NS 99/10, June 19 2010.



One of the two native shrubs observed, *Meliccytus alpinus*, on one of the two surface boulders observed.

#### Exotic vegetation

The universal cover is a low stature turf of exotic grasses and herbs. Species typically found are listed in the Ecological report.

A number of exotic trees have been planted, mainly evergreen. These are mostly pine, Douglas Fir and eucalyptus, as shown on *Figures 5 and 6*.

Eucalyptus trees generally occur as solitary or spaced specimens of large size with attractive appearance. They are regarded as specimen trees.

A long belt of mature Douglas Fir lines the western boundary, on the golf course land. Long belts of mature pine with some cypress line the eastern boundaries, on the Three Parks Land, with the exception of the elevated meltwater channel area, where the airstrip crosses. A more ragged belt of mature pines and Douglas Fir, with some larch and eucalyptus runs west-east across the scarp at the south end of the Gordon-Moseby and Robertson properties.

A belt of Douglas Fir with eucalypts and silver birch and a couple of oaks lines the northern road boundary of the Robertson property.

A belt of Lombardy poplar exists along the Ballantyne Road boundary about opposite Gordon Road. These have been topped due to the presence of a power line also running along the road.

A marked feature of the west-east running conifer belts is the dense shade cast, which is heavy with frost in cold winter conditions. All the belts will provide good wind shelter although possibly they are too dense causing turbulence downwind.



Four mature oaks are a feature along the highway frontage, along with a large poplar with a markedly stout and straight central leader.

A greater variety of trees and shrubs surrounds the four dwellings including conifer species (cedar, spruce, *cryptomeria*, ornamental cypress-like trees), deciduous trees (oak, birch, *gleditsia*, maple) and evergreen trees (*eucalyptus*, *acacia*, *prunus* spp. *Arbutus unedo*).

A collection of pines, larch and cypress (*macrocarpa*) forms a grove along Ballantyne Road on the Spencer-Bower property. Mature poplars are present in the hollow at this location; and oaks have been inter-planted with the conifers.

Macrocarpas and eucalypt species have been planted on the BIL land to the northwest of the substation to screen it

Trees are shown on *Figures 5 and 6*.

#### Weed Species

Pest broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) was observed in two main places - along the Ballantyne Road boundary and along the north side of the BIL land, crossing the Robertson and Gordon-Moseby boundary in a couple of places.

Wilding Douglas Fir have established in small patches on the Spencer-Bower and Robertson properties.

#### 5.15 Wildlife

Apart from rabbits, animals were scarce. A hawk was observed flying over, and a pair of paradise ducks was seen near the high knoll. Bellbirds were observed feeding on flowers on one of the gum trees and were heard on the Gordon-Moseby/Robertson properties. Dawn Palmer provides more information on species in her report at Part 4.3. Generally the conclusion is that there is little wildlife value on the site at present.



Singleton Eucalyptus trees in deer paddocks on BIL land.



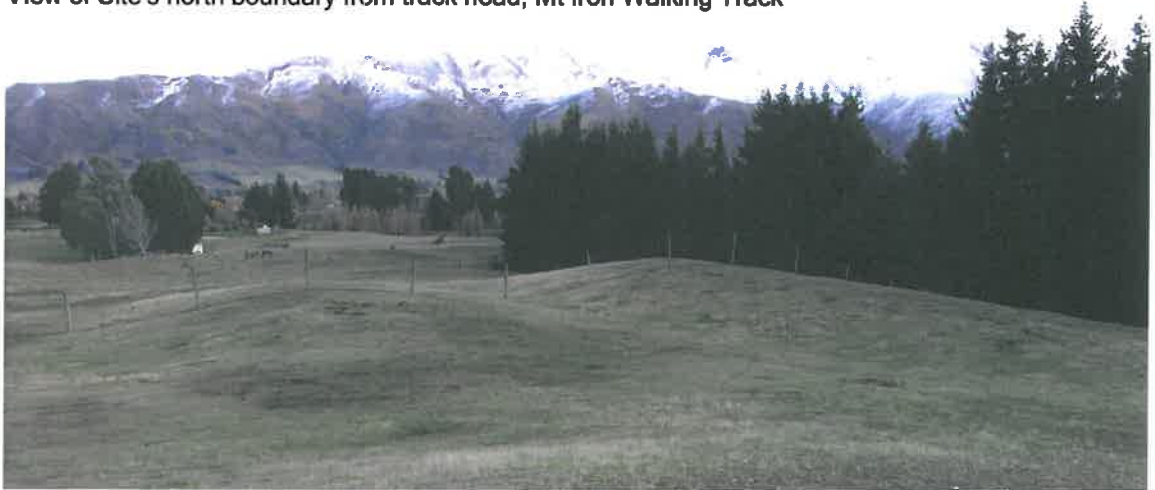
**Trees considered of high amenity value on the site clockwise from top left: Eucalyptus in BIL deer paddock; Eucalyptus at BIL house; Eucalyptus along Spencer-Bower east boundary; mixed plantings on Spencer-Bower property near Ballantyne Rd; oak at entrance to Gordon-Moseby on SH84; poplar specimen on Gordon-Moseby near SH84**



High Amenity afforded by existing trees along north boundary of site in SH84 corridor



View of Site's north boundary from track head, Mt Iron Walking Track



Dense continuous Douglas Fir shelterbelt on boundary between Site and Golf course (right of image)



**Mature Pine, Douglas Fir and Larch on scarp between meltwater channel and outwash**



**Cypress and Eucalyptus planting screening substation on south boundary of site.**



## 5.16 Cultural Elements

Cultural elements on the site include:

- dwellings and outbuildings and gardens
- driveways, stock fences including deer fencing
- a pile of rocks of unknown origin
- substation, power lines,
- airstrip

There are no known features or sites of historical significance<sup>8</sup>; and there are no known specific tangata whenua values<sup>9</sup>. Recommendations by KTKO for future development include the creation of wetlands and native planting and green spaces generally, and the recognition of the area as a junction of significant ara tawhito (trails).

Existing cultural elements (except rock pile) are shown on the Paterson Pitts Survey Plan W3531 Jan 2010.

## 5.2 Visual and Other Perceptual Values

Overall, the landscape of the site generally has a pleasant, moderately natural appearance with a dominance of landform and vegetation, typical of pastoral landscape. The BIL land has a somewhat barren appearance due to the poor quality of the ground cover and the absence of trees.

It is likely to be classified as Visual Amenity Landscape. As the site has been identified for urban development, landscape classification is a pointless exercise.

### Visual Coherence

Visual coherence<sup>10</sup> is moderate. Landforms and the landform pattern remain intact with superimposed cultural patterns sensitive to landform in only a few places; for example, a shelter belt confined to the scarp between the two meltwater channel levels; and a grove of poplars indicating the damp hollow on the Spencer-Bower property. The Gordon-Moseby dwelling occupies a slight rise in the northern meltwater channel.

In most parts however the pattern of fences and plantings is not related to topographical patterns and does not highlight the three different landforms. The long straight shelterbelts in particular are completely irresponsive to landform patterns. There are no hydrological features (such as streams) cultural patterns could follow and express coherence; and no native vegetation remains.

### Legibility

On a broad scale, the landforms have high legibility<sup>11</sup> and hold visual interest, largely due to the low stature cover, the openness of the BIL land, and the fact they remain almost entirely undisturbed. The distinction between the meltwater channel and the outwash surface, and between the outwash surface and the kame and kettle topography is readily made. The

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<sup>8</sup> Archaeological Assessment for Ballantyne Plan Change Investigation – Sole M, Kopuwai Consulting June 2010

<sup>9</sup> Preliminary Statement- Proposed Plan Change: Three Parks North, Ballantyne Road, Wanaka, Rosenbrock C, June 2010 KTKO Consultancy Ltd 15 June 2010

<sup>10</sup> the degree to which the various landscape elements combine to form an harmonious appearance

<sup>11</sup> the degree to which the landforms and landscape express their formative processes and the clarity with which this can be understood by looking at it





transition from kame and kettle to terminal moraine is less distinct, but the exaggerated knoll and hollow topography of the southwest part of the Spencer-Bower property is clearly different. This distinction is not so apparent through the Golf Course to the west, but the transition from hilly to flatter terrain is clear south of Ballantyne Road (although development for building has probably made this distinction artificially).

The overlaid cultural pattern of planting (which is a dominant feature) masks or confuses legibility to some degree.

The pattern of landform is the one of the most striking and distinctive aspects of the site. The long shelterbelts are also impressive (for their length) but they are off-site.

#### Notable Visual Elements

The specimen gum trees are a notable visual feature, along with mature oak trees and a large poplar on the SH84 frontage.

#### Road Frontages

The layered mature tree planting bounding SH84 contains the highway environment and creates a pleasant outlook. The trees form an attractive backdrop to walkers coming down off Mt Iron to the car park directly opposite the entrance to the Gordon-Moseby property (see Photo on p12). Trees planted in the road reserve will add to this effect as they grow.

The vista north from Ballantyne Road across open paddocks to the classic form of Mt Iron is attractive, if one ignores the foreground of sprayed broom, topped Lombardy poplars and the substation. If this land remained undeveloped the value of this vista may be enhanced as the Three Parks land is developed. At present, whilst it is pleasant, it is not considered a key view of rural farmland from a district road but the view of Mt Iron is considered important and worth protecting.



View from Ballantyne Road across the BIL land to Mt Iron



### Detracting Elements

The Ballantyne Road boundary is generally less appealing due to the presence of trees of poor form including the macrocarpas adjacent to the Spencer-Bower property; the substation and overhead power lines; the topped poplars; and the patches of pest broom.

Some would probably regard pine trees and shelter belts as less appealing elements, especially the more mature ones.

The four topped Douglas Fir on the Gordon-Moseby property under the power line and the power line itself are detractors.

The general clutter of yards, outbuildings and garden elements including eclectic plantings around each dwelling has lower visual appeal.

### Non-Visual Qualities

Non-visual perceptual qualities are the sense of spaciousness and the nature of the audible environment. Spaciousness is of little relevance given the envisaged urban uses. The main audible factor noted was the constant noise of traffic along SH84, which was considered intrusive whilst on the northern two properties; and to a lesser extent Ballantyne Road, both having a 70-80kph speed limit. Otherwise sounds heard were those associated generally with the urban environment, along with activity on the golf course.

## **5.3 Associative Activities and Meanings**

The contribution the site makes to road journeys along SH84 and Ballantyne Road is likely to be the most significant meaning the site has for the general public, with the tree planting along SH84 likely to be the most important association as previously discussed.

The site is part of the western panorama viewed from Mt Iron, contributing to the current enjoyment of open pastoral landscape however it holds no particular significance in this view.

The Douglas Fir shelter belt prevents any visual connection between the site and the golf course.

The tree planting along SH84 and along part of Ballantyne Road also limits visual connectivity with the site.

There are no known historical or cultural elements or events associated with the site.

## **6 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

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Landscape character is the distinctive spatial combination of landscape attributes that gives an area its identity.

Maintaining sense of place and local distinctiveness in new developments can be achieved through understanding the existing landscape character of the site and incorporating key attributes into the new design.

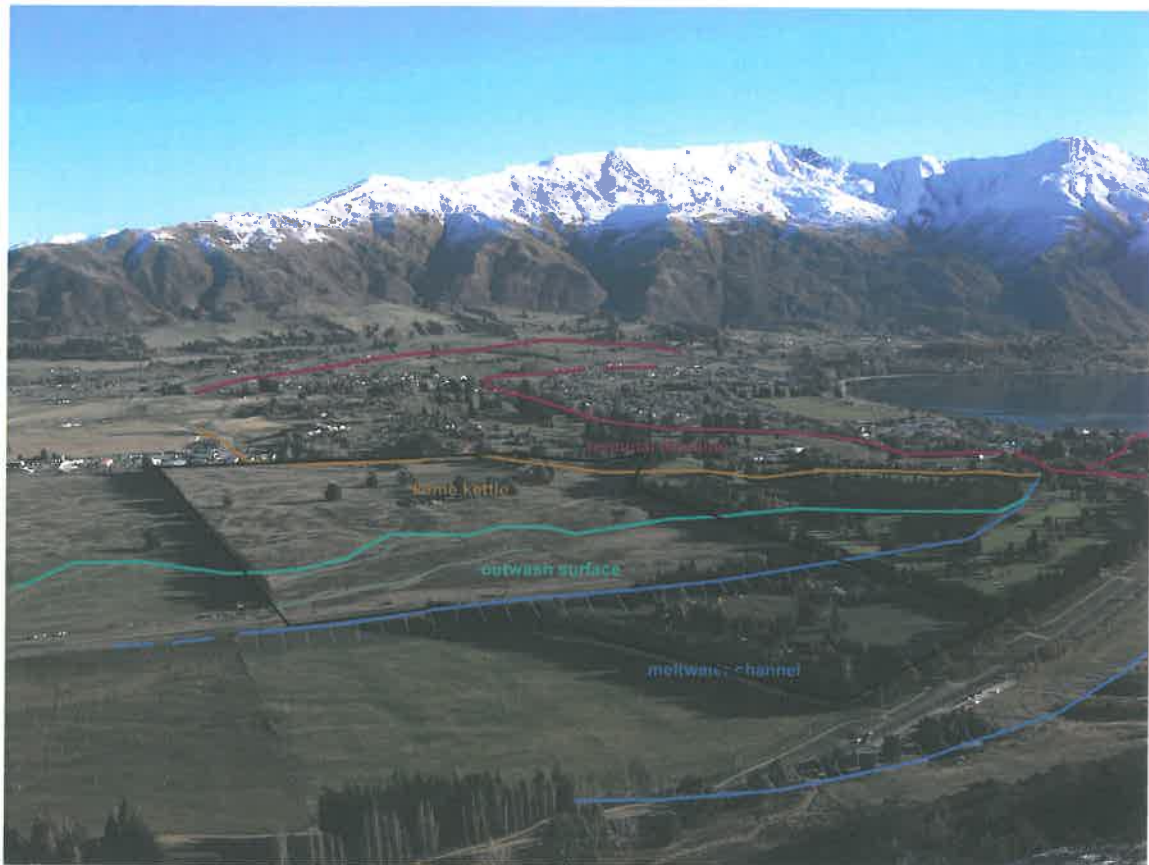
The current landscape character is typical of heavily modified basin floor pastoral and rural lifestyle block landscape, dominated by vegetation and landform with nodes of built development (the four dwelling areas plus the substation). There are virtually no indigenous



vegetation elements remaining, but landforms and landform pattern remains largely intact. A mainly geometric pattern of fences and tree plantings has been superimposed over the landform, mostly irresponsive to the underlying pattern. Built development is modest to small scale and domestic in character, or utilitarian (deer shed, substation, airstrip). Generally the landscape has a tidy well-managed appearance although the degree of rabbit infestation and the poor quality of the pasture on the BIL land, and the occasional presence of pest broom detracts from this.

Land forms are gently undulating to rolling or hummocky and include a rolling planar scarp element. Macro landforms form a clear structure with meltwater channel and outwash bands running west-east across the northern part of the site, and kame-kettle topography comprising almost all the remaining terrain. A small area of moraine crosses the southwest corner, part of the terminal moraine loop enclosing the south end of Lake Wanaka. Within the macro-landforms micro landforms are more “chaotic”, with variable shape, scale, gradients and orientation. The forms tend to be organic or irregular in shape. All landforms tend to be soft in form with blurred edges, due to a long period of weathering and a mantle of loess and the fact the underlying geology is silts, sands and gravels rather than hard rock or boulders.

#### Geomorphic units of site and surrounding area





The landscape of the northern two properties and the Spencer-Bower property is of a smaller scale, more compartmentalised and more visually complex. In contrast the BIL landscape is mostly very open and visually simple, with a central node of visual complexity (the dwelling area). The substation is a discreet visually complex node of utilitarian character.

Planting is mainly utilitarian in character, dominated by shelter belts of conifers (pine and Douglas Fir), with some intermixed with broadleaves (mainly eucalyptus and birch); or singular shade trees (dominantly eucalyptus). Shelter belts reflect the prevailing winds in this location, running west-east or north-south giving shelter from north to northwest winds and cold southerly to southeasterly winds. The belts of planting however also mark the cadastral boundaries.

Mixed amenity plantings are restricted mainly to the dwelling areas, and the moraine terrain on the Spencer-Bower property. Trees are a dominant element over the southwest corner and on the northern two properties.

View from Mt Iron over the site (using zoom lens). More open pastureland characterises the BIL land (upper left). The Gordon-Moseby and Robertson properties (and the Spencer-Bower property far right background) have a more compartmentalized and visually complex character with many more trees.

