

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act ('Act')

AND

IN THE MATTER of the submission by Bridesdale Farm Developments Limited
on the QLDC Proposed District Plan (Stream 15) Open Space
and Recreation

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF STEPHEN SKELTON FOR

Bridesdale Farm Developments Limited
S2391 – Bridesdale - T15 – Skelton S - Evidence

3rd August 2018



INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Stephen Russell Skelton. I have the qualifications of a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Landscape Architecture (first class honours) from Lincoln University. I am the Director of Patch Limited (**Patch**), a landscape architecture and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and the acting chairman of the Southern Branch.
2. I have been involved in landscape consultancy work in the Queenstown Lakes District for over 5 years, working in both the public and private sector. I held the position of landscape planner with Lakes Environmental before it was absorbed by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**) in 2013. I then held the position of landscape architect at Baxter Design in Queenstown. I founded Patch in June 2016 and my work has included all facets of landscape architecture and landscape planning through the range of small and large-scale projects. My work includes master planning, commercial and residential landscape design, preparation of native restoration planting plans, preparation of landscape management plans and preparation of landscape assessments for resource consent applications.
3. While this matter is not before the Environment Court, I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. This evidence has been prepared in accordance with it and I agree to comply with it. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

4. I have been asked by Bridesdale Farm Developments Limited to provide evidence which assesses the landscape and visual amenity effects on their submission (2391) seeking that three parcels of land be rezoned Active Sport and Recreation (**ASR**). These parcels include Lot 404 DP 505513 hereafter referred to as the Bridesdale land, Lot 400 DP 445230 hereafter referred to as the QLDC reserve land and Lot 321 DP 379403 hereafter referred to as Widgeon Park

5. In preparing this evidence I have reviewed the Statement of Evidence of Dr Shayne Galloway, the Statement of Evidence of Ms Jeannie Galavazi and the s42a report of Ms Christine Edgley.
6. The submission seeks to rezone to ASR all three parcels which include most of the flat land between the Lake Hayes Estate, Bridesdale and Queenstown Country Club residential areas and the Kawarau River. I refer to all this land as the river flats. My evidence will assess the submission as a whole and consider the landscape character and visual amenity effects of the river flats, should the whole of the flats be rezoned ASR.

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Landscape Description

7. The river flats exist between the Kawarau River and the residential areas of Bridesdale, Lake Hayes Estate and the Queenstown Country Club. They are part of a wider landscape which is typical of the Wakatipu Basin, containing river terraces, roche moutonnée features, escarpments, wetlands, rivers, residential and rural living development.
8. Significant residential development associated with the approval of the Bridesdale area has recently occurred on the upper edge of an escarpment which marks the northern extents of the river flats. The Bridesdale residential development has extended the residential developments of Shotover Country and Lake Hayes Estate to the southeast. This residential development is spread across the series of terraces between the Ladies Mile Highway (SH6) and the Shotover / Kawarau Rivers. It is worth noting that development is occurring on the upper terrace near SH6 and it is anticipated that the area known as Ladies Mile will experience significant change as a result of residential development.
9. Hayes Creek flows from the outlet of Lake Hayes, against the western toe of Morven Hill towards the Kawarau River. It marks the most eastern extent of the residential areas of Bridesdale and Lake Hayes Estate. The Kawarau River is to the south and east of the river flats. The vegetation associated with Hayes Creek and the Kawarau River visibly distinguishes the river corridor from both the open river flats, the residential areas on and above the escarpment and the steep, shrub clad mountain slopes to the south.



10. The majority of the river flats are covered in pasture grass with lines of mature shelter belt trees, generally running north to south. The Hayes Creek corridor spills onto the site and with it, groups of exotic trees, predominantly willow. A patch of recently planted indigenous vegetation exists along a small part of the escarpment face north of the river flats.

11. The river flats are obviously farmed but are not very well developed for farming. Aside from a hay shed, gates and fences there is limited evidence that the area is as tended or cared for as many of the more manicured paddocks of the district. The river flats are weedy and boggy and do not contain a consistent cover of pasture. Hayes Creek Road bisects the river flats and terminates at the riverside parking area, where human recreation activity is clearly present. The riverside portion of the Queenstown Trail hugs the southern and eastern extents of the river flats and human activity associated with the use of the trail is often visible from the river flats and the escarpment.

12. The flat lands between the escarpment and the Kawarau River are divided as follows:
 - one area of Bridesdale garden allotments,
 - the Bridesdale land which is 16.82ha in area,
 - three lots to the west of the site and one small lot to the east of the site which are owned by QLDC,
 - a narrow portion of land adjacent to the Kawarau River which is Crown land administered by DOC and contains a portion of the Queenstown Trail,
 - QLDC owned land on and near the escarpment, north of the Bridesdale garden allotments.

Landscape Category

13. I provided evidence in Stream 14 of the PDP with regard to the appropriate landscape category of the site. In preparing this evidence I undertook an assessment of the river flats under the Amended Pigeon Bay criteria and determined that the site is not part of an Outstanding Natural Landscape. I attach this evidence as **Appendix A**.

14. In summary, I consider the river flats are not part of the ONL for the following reasons:

- The natural character of the escarpment and river flats has been significantly reduced by:
 - i. The presence of residential development on the upper edge (ridgeline) of the escarpment,
 - ii. The removal of mature grey scrubland and gum trees which existed on the escarpment prior to the Bridesdale development,
 - iii. The presence of an urban style (kerb and channel) road which traverses the escarpment,
 - iv. The presence of the Bridesdale garden allotments and future sheds,
 - v. The potential for future permitted development and activities within the QLDC recreation reserves,
 - vi. Hayes Creek Road running across the river flats to the parking area near the Kawarau River.
- The distance between the edge of the Kawarau River and the escarpment is significant (>700m),
- The river flats are a modified, pastoral environment with low natural character values,
- The aesthetic values of the river flats is low and only relevant to its visual association with the Kawarau River and Remarkables ONLFs as viewed from north to south (**Appendix A, Images 2 and 3**),
- The escarpment / river relationship has been degraded by existing and residual development,
- The escarpment / river relationship was not considered 'outstanding' to the west of the site near the Shotover River / Kawarau River confluence and Shotover Country setting up an inconsistent approach to identification of escarpment / terrace / river ONLs.

15. While I consider at one time the river flats and escarpment may have formed a legible part of the Kawarau River / Ben Cruachan / Remarkables ONL, the relationship of the river flats to the more outstanding and natural features has been significantly degraded by the reduction in the landscape's natural character and the ubiquitous presence of built development.

Residual and Potential Development on the River Flats

16. Both QLDC reserve lands west of the Bridesdale land are vested as a recreation reserve and zoned for Informal Recreation. Widgeon Park is designated as



recreation reserve (designation #365). As I understand, permitted development in Widgeon Park includes:

- a 20% impervious surface coverage,
- 5% building coverage with a maximum floor area of 100m² for any building and a 10m height restriction,
- Exterior lighting,
- Activity hours from 7am to midnight.

17. The Bridesdale garden allotments at the base of the escarpment cover an area of 1.2ha and allow for sheds of 10m² or 20m². An existing road within reserve land, Hayes Creek Road extends across the river flats in a north south direction and a parking area exists at the southern end of this road, providing access to a river trail which is part of the Queenstown Trail network.

18. It is appropriate to consider the effects of the permitted recreation development on the river flats as well as the effects associated with the existing adjacent urban development. It is also relevant to consider the pressures the land is experiencing with respect to recreation demands from the growing residential areas to the north as set out in the evidence of Dr Galloway.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

19. I rely on the evidence of Dr Galloway, especially with regard to his description of the potential recreation activities which may occur within the proposed ASR areas. In part 62 of his evidence Dr Galloway sets out activities which the community has sought to develop in the river flats should the rezoning be approved.

20. I support the Objectives, Policies and Assessment Matters relevant to landscape contained within the notified Chapter 38 and discussed in part 25 of Ms Edgley's evidence. I understand the assessment matters are relevant only to discretionary and non-complying activities and that should the ASR zoning be applied to the river flats the activities set out in part 16 of my evidence would be permitted except that buildings up to 400m² (rather than 100m²) would be permitted. Any activity not permitted within the ASR area would be subject to the landscape assessment matters set out in part 38.15 of the PDP, which are considerably robust. These matters are relevant to open space areas which are located in both ONL's and Rural

Character Landscapes and would give Council discretion with respect to whichever landscape classification the Stream 14 Panel considers most appropriate for the river flats.

Effects on Visual Amenity

21. The visual amenity of the river flats is embodied in its open character, providing views across it to the surrounding landscapes. This amenity is highest from the elevated areas to the north looking south across the river flats towards the Kawarau River and steep mountains slopes (**Appendix A, Images 2 & 3**). Southern viewpoints across the site are generally characterised by the urban areas of Bridesdale and Lake Hayes Estate, although the more distant and dramatic Slope Hill and Coronet Peak ONLs are visible (**Appendix A, Image 1**). The flat, unkept character of the river flats offers very little in terms of visual amenity in its own right.
22. Should the river flats be zoned ASR, there is potential that some of the flats will accommodate buildings and impervious surfaces. The overall openness of the river flats would be largely maintained and the open context they provide to views of the surrounding landscapes would continue to be appreciated. I consider that the rezoning of the river flats to ASR would result in very low adverse effects on visual amenity.

Effects on Landscape Character

23. The site currently holds a dominant pastoral character. This landscape character is in the process of change in the context of the receiving landscape of urban development and associated activities, including those that may take place at Widgeon Park and those that are occurring in the Bridesdale garden allotments. Regardless of the rezoning of the river flats, the pastoral elements will become less dominant. The existing, permitted and anticipated activities within the garden allotments, Widgeon Park, the Queenstown Trail and subsidiary trails and parking areas are and will continue, to further render the river flats more park-like in character.
24. The river flats have the capacity to absorb significant recreation-based development without adversely affecting the open space values. I consider the rezoning of the river flats to ASR would likely result in a more coherent land use patterning on the river flats. While the open character would be slightly reduced, the dominance of openness would be retained, and the pastoral character would be replaced with a



parkland character. This is an appropriate landscape character within the river flats as they are part of a remnant rural land wedged between the more natural areas of the lake and river landscape to the south and the more urban areas of the upper terraces to the north.

CONCLUSION

25. Overall, I consider the river flats are part of a remnant pastoral landscape which holds very little natural character. The existing and residual land uses and pressures on the river flats are transforming the landscape from its dominant pastoral character to a more parkland character. The rezoning of the river flats to ASR will formalise this transition and likely result in a more coherent landscape patterns which would maintain the open space and visual amenity values of the site.

Stephen Skelton

Registered Landscape Architect

3 August 2018



APPENDIX A

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF STEPHEN SKELTON FOR
Bridesdale Farm Developments Limited
SO655 – Bridesdale - T14 – Skelton S. – Evidence
13TH JUNE 2018

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act ('Act')

AND

IN THE MATTER of the submission by Bridesdale Farm Developments Limited on the QLDC Proposed District Plan (Stream 14) Wakatipu Basin

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF STEPHEN SKELTON FOR

Bridesdale Farm Developments Limited

SO655 – Bridesdale - T14 – Skelton S. - Evidence

13th June 2018



INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Stephen Russell Skelton. I have the qualifications of a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Landscape Architecture (first class honours) from Lincoln University. I am the Director of Patch Limited (**Patch**), a landscape architecture and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and the acting chairman of the Southern Branch.
2. I have been involved in landscape consultancy work in the Queenstown Lakes District for over 5 years, working in both the public and private sector. I held the position of landscape planner with Lakes Environmental before it was absorbed by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**) in 2013. I then held the position of landscape architect at Baxter Design in Queenstown. I founded Patch in June 2016 and my work has included all facets of landscape architecture and landscape planning through the range of small and large-scale projects. My work includes master planning, commercial and residential landscape design, preparation of native restoration planting plans, preparation of landscape management plans and preparation of landscape assessments for resource consent applications.
3. I am professionally familiar with the values of the Wakatipu Basin. I have lived in the District for 8 years and have witnessed the Wakatipu Basin through all seasonal, diurnal and climatic variations. I am an avid mountain climber and paraglider and I have viewed the Wakatipu Basin from almost all the surrounding mountain summits and slopes and from the air. I have walked or cycled most of the Queenstown Trail. I have driven all the publicly accessible roads within the Wakatipu Basin. I have a professional and intimate understanding of the basin's landscape and visual amenity values.
4. I have read and understand the Strategic Direction of the Proposed District Plan and the objectives and policies relevant to this submission, especially those contained with the Rural, Landscape and Wakatipu Basin chapters.
5. While this matter is not before the Environment Court, I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. This evidence has been prepared in accordance with it and I agree to comply with it. I



have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

6. I have been asked by Bridesdale Farm Developments Limited to provide evidence which assesses the landscape and visual amenity effects of parts of the Submission #655 which relates to the Bridesdale Land (the site) (**Attachment A**). The following evidence provides:
- A description of the submission;
 - Commentary on the evidence of Landscape Architect Helen Mellsop;
 - An assessment of the landscape category boundary;
 - An assessment of the proposed rezoning if the site;
 - Recommendations;
 - Conclusion.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBMISSION

7. The submission seeks to:
- Amend the zoning of the site to Medium Density Residential (MDR);
 - Amend the Planning Map to remove the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB);
or
 - Reposition the UGB to include all of the site;
 - Amend the Planning Map so that the landscape category boundary is located on the true left of the Kowarau River;
 - Amend related provisions contained in the Proposed District Plan (PDP).
8. My evidence only concerns the landscape category boundary and small part of the MDR rezoning aspects of the submission. I assume the location of the UGB will be consequential upon the MDR zoning so I do not address that further.

EVIDENCE OF HELEN MELLOP

Outstanding Natural Landscape

9. Ms Mellsop prepared a Statement of Evidence in the matter of *Hearing Stream 14: Wakatipu Basin hearing and transferring Stage 1 submission related to Arrowtown*

and Lake Hayes dated 28 May 2018. As part of her evidence she provided landscape evidence with regard to submission 655, including an assessment of the proposal to relocate the ONL and to rezone parts of the land. In terms of Ms Mellsop's ONL evidence, I agree on the following:

- The Bridesdale land above Kawarau River Escarpment (the escarpment) has been developed as a medium density urban area;¹
- Since the approval of SH15001, the escarpment has been modified by earthworks, roading and native planting;
- Since the approval of SH15001, the land below the escarpment (the river flats) has been modified by earthworks, stormwater ponds and a rectilinear pattern of roads and allotments;
- The above modifications have undermined the legibility and expressiveness of the river valley landscape to some extent and reduced its natural character.²

10. Similarly, I consider since the approval of SH15001 the following additional factors have undermined the legibility and expressiveness and reduced the natural character of the escarpment and river flats:

- Prior to the approval of SH15001, the escarpment supported a mature stand of eucalyptus trees and swathes of native grey scrubland which have since been removed;
- The upper edge of the escarpment no longer forms a ridgeline. Now, a pattern of no less than 10 gabled roofs and building elevations form the ridgeline (**Image 1**);
- The allotment area near the base of the escarpment is 1.2ha in area and each allotment is permitted to have a 10m² or 20m² shed with a height of 2.5m.

11. In her evidence, Ms Mellsop cites the conclusions she made in her ONL assessment for SH15001. While her historical account remains applicable, I do not consider this 2015 assessment appropriately describes the existing situation on the river flats and escarpment.

¹ Part 6.28

² Part 6.29

12. Ms Mellsoy recognises the proposed Informal Recreation Reserve zoning on the site west of the Bridesdale land below the escarpment. She does not consider this zoning will result in a significant adverse effect on the natural character and states that recreation facilities or buildings in this area are discretionary activities. She considers that as a consequence of this discretionary, regime no activities in the reserve land will result in significant adverse effects on natural character. However she does not refer to the Recreation Reserve Designation (in the ODP and the PDP).
13. The QLDC owned Recreation Reserve (designation #365) is approximately 8ha in area. As I understand, the designation allows development to occur within this site without any planning approval. Permitted development in this designation area includes a 20% impervious surface coverage (approx. 16,000m²), 5% building coverage (approx. 4,000m²), buildings to 10m in height and a maximum of 100m² in area for any one building.
14. Despite her description of a modified environment, Ms Mellsoy continues to consider the escarpment and river flats part of an ONL. I respectfully disagree and address this matter in detail below in my assessment of the landscape category boundary.

Proposed Rezoning

15. Ms Mellsoy also provided landscape evidence with regards to the submission to rezone all of the site to MDR. In terms of Ms Mellsoy's rezoning evidence, I agree on the following:
- For most of the site, rezoning is unlikely to have any additional adverse effects on landscape or visual amenity;
 - Where existing residential lots and open space adjoins the margins of Hayes Creek, additional development on this land has the potential to significantly detract from the natural character of the creek margins.
16. Where my opinions of the proposed rezoning and those of Ms Mellsoy's differ they will be addressed below in my assessment of the proposed rezoning.

LANDSCAPE CATEGORY BOUNDARY

17. I have seen no detailed assessment of the site in the Environment Court Decision C203/2004, which determined the escarpment and river flats to be part of an ONL. The Court provides little discussion of the values of this specific part of the landscape as C203/2004 examined the much larger Remarkables and Ben Cruchan mountains

and the Kawarau River, to determine where the northern edge of this large, vast and complex ONL ended. As part of its decision, the Court references a portion of Landscape Architect Ms EJ Kidson's evidence:

*The Kawarau River similarly (to the legibility of the Remarkables and Ben Cruchan Range as a mountain range) is also highly legible as a river valley that has a confined path with clear banks and floodplains.*³

18. I consider that the Kawarau River would continue to be highly legible as a river valley without the benefit of the escarpment or the river flats. I also find it inconsistent that the 'banks and floodplains' of the site were included in the ONL as determined by the Court, while the 'banks and floodplains' of the Shotover River / Kawarau River confluence near what is now Shotover Country were not included as part of the ONL (**Attachment B**).

19. I note that the C203/2004 decision references a part of the Environment Court Decision C180/99 which states:

*...ascertaining an area of outstanding natural landscape should not (normally) require experts. Usually an outstanding natural landscape should be so obvious (in general terms) that there is no need for expert analysis.*⁴

20. I also note that the word 'outstanding' in section 6(b) of the RMA means "conspicuous, eminent, especially because of excellence" and "remarkable in"⁵ and that if considered by a district council, then *outstanding* should be considered in terms of the district.⁶ I do not consider the Bridesdale escarpment or the river flats are *obviously* outstanding or natural, especially in the context of the wider Remarkables/ Ben Cruchan/ Kawarau River/ Morven Hill ONL. The SH150011 landscape assessment prepared by Baxter Design Group provides a useful commentary on the escarpment. This report states:

By itself, the terrace face and floodplains are not considered to be significant...()In comparison, the ONL's of Peninsula Hill, Slope Hill / Lake Hayes and the Crown Terrace are significant on their own and if removed

³ EnvCrt C203/2004 page 7

⁴ EnvCrt C180/99, Part 99

⁵ Env Crt C23/99, Part 82

⁶ Env Crt C23/99, Part 85

from the wider landscape context would continue to be considered outstanding. The terrace and floodplains of the site however, if removed from the Kawarau River context would not be considered outstanding and would instead perhaps form part of a VAL.⁷

21. As noted above, the escarpment and river flats have been modified with the approval of SH15001. While there has been some discussion about the landscape category of the site in the SH15001 and decisions by the Court, the amended Pigeon Bay criteria has not been applied specifically to the site. The following portion of this report applies the Amended Pigeon Bay criteria to the river flats and southern most escarpment between pt 439, the Kawarau River and Hayes Creek.

Application of the Amended Pigeon Bay Criteria

Natural Science Factors

22. The escarpment and river flats are part of a series of terraces between the Shotover and Kawarau Rivers, Slope Hill and Lake Hayes ONLs and ONFs. They form part of a river terrace landscape which has direct associations to the Frankton Flats and Lake Wakatipu. Their geologic make up is a mix of Alluvium and Loess/Alluvium. Topographically, this land presents a series of flat terraces stepping down escarpments from the upper Ladies Mile and Frankton Flats to meet the flood prone deltas, pasturelands and wetlands adjacent to the river corridors. This river terrace topography is interrupted by a small *rôche moutonnée* (pt 439) west of the site and the much larger *rôche moutonnée* of Morven Hill (pt.750) and its westerly satellite summit (pt 559). Near the western toe of Morven Hill is Hayes Creek which drains Lake Hayes. Hayes Creek has cut a shallow gully between Morven Hill and the terrace landform.

23. North and west of the Kawarau River is a large (approximately 48ha) area of flat pastureland (the river flats). This flat pastureland extends between 300m and 700m north from the edge of the Kawarau River to the base of an escarpment. This escarpment has been modified by residential development, roads and the removal of vegetation.

⁷ Part 69

24. Ecologically, the river flats and escarpment has been heavily influenced by residential and pastoral land uses which have established a pattern of exotic evergreen and deciduous trees in belts across the river flats, while the floor of the flats is covered in exotic pasture grass. On and near the escarpment the vegetation is generally composed of residential amenity trees and shrubs. Self-seeded willow trees line the banks of the Kawarau River and Hayes Creek.
25. It is understood that the river flats are within a flood zone. This adds a dynamic component to the landscape that can demonstrate the river flat's association with the Kawarau River. This dynamic component is temporary, however the effects of this dynamic component (siltation, pooling, erosion) may periodically change the form and appearance of the river flats.

Aesthetic Values

26. The aesthetic values of the site are mostly embodied in views across it toward the mountains which backdrop the basin, towards the willow choked, but no less vegetated Kawarau River corridor and the pastoral river flats. These views include vistas from the escarpment and elevated portions of the Queenstown Trail towards the slopes of the Remarkables (**Image 2**). The river flats act as the foreground to these views and the pattern of exotic trees and pasturelands provides a pastoral context to the foreground of these views.
27. Another viewpoint, which is probably the more frequent viewpoint, is from the public trail along the true left of the Kawarau River bank, looking north across the river flat to the Bridesdale development (**Image 1**). From this viewpoint the river flats are a not particularly memorable immediate foreground and the aesthetic values of the escarpment as an open foreground toward Coronet Peak have been significantly diminished with the level of development which has occurred atop the escarpment.
28. In both the viewpoints described above, the level of development anticipated in the recreation reserves in tandem with that permitted in the Bridesdale allotments will diminish the naturalness and coherence of the river flats.
29. Aside from their function as the foreground to views, the river flats are farmed, and the level of human modification is obvious. They are not particularly natural or pristine and they in many ways contrast with the naturalness of the Kawarau River and the ONL slopes above it.

Expressiveness (Legibility)

30. The formative processes of the landscape are clearly legible in the series of terraces and escapements as well as the *rôche moutonnée* of Morven Hill and pt 439 and the steep and contrasting north facing mountain slopes of the Remarkables. The surface of the Kawarau River and Hayes Creek, and the associated wetland areas are generally cloaked by willow trees and not readily perceivable from the ground plane. The distance between the Bridesdale Escarpment and the surface of the Kawarau River, combined with the low natural character and anticipated development on the river flats does not clearly link the escarpment to the Kawarau River. The escarpment and river terraces are more clearly expressed as a remnant of the historical flows of the Kawarau River and pastoral land use.

Transient Values

31. The change in colour expressed by the deciduous trees in the landscape including willow and poplars give the landscape a transient quality. So too does the occasional presence of snow and frost on the flatlands in the winter months. In much longer time scale of decades, the landscape's susceptibility to flooding is also a transient value. The presence of grazing animals and birds is also a transient value.

Shared and Recognised Values

32. The site is part of a low-lying area which is not highly visible from much of the surrounding areas. The values of the site are associated with the existing pastoral land use which is indicative of the historic associations of land use within the Wakatipu Basin. This more agrarian land use is being, and is anticipated to be, supplanted by more recreation and residential land uses. These uses can be shared and recognised by the residents of the surrounding residential areas who use the roads and trails within the landscape as recreation space.

Values to Tangata Whenua

33. No nohanga sites or known waahi tapu within the vicinity of the site.

Historical Associations

34. The site is part of a historical farm, associated with the Red Cottage on the Bridesdale Land. There are no known archaeological sites on the escarpment or river flats.

Summary of Amended Pigeon Bay Criteria

35. The above application of the *Amended Pigeon Bay Criteria* identifies that the site is part of a wider terrace landform. The natural science factors of the terraces and escarpments and their associations with the Shotover and Kawarau River are legible and expressive. However, the naturalness of the terraces, escarpments and river flats have been degraded by existing and permitted residential and recreational land uses and associated effects. The river flats and escarpments do not display natural vegetation patterns and the more naturalistic patterns of (exotic willow) vegetation occur near the edges of the Kawarau River and Hayes Creek. The values of the site are generally that of a semi-rural, and recreation flatlands which are a foreground in views towards the Remarkables ONL in one direction and the Bridesdale (and other) residential development in the other direction.

Landscape Category

36. The residential developments of Bridesdale (including the garden allotments) and the Judge and Jury portion of Lake Hayes Estate (being the lots south of Judge and Jury Drive) has degraded the integrity of the escarpment and the river flats, loosened their relationship to the Kawarau River and clearly diminished their natural character. The escarpment is between 300m and 700m in distance from the surface of the river and between the escarpment and the river is a rural farming pastureland segmented by exotic shelterbelt trees. Existing residential development is highly visible from the river flats and forms the ridgeline of the escarpment (**Image 1**). This existing development and the potential development which may occur on the designated Recreation Reserve has degraded and will further degrade the relationship of the escarpment and river flats to the natural and outstanding qualities of the Kawarau River and the wider Remarkables/Ben Cruchan ONL.
37. I consider that in 2004 when the Court determined the terrace and floodplain to be part of the ONL, it is likely the river flats and escarpment were more natural in

character and legibly associated with the Kawarau. However, since the developments enabled by SH15001 and what is possible within the designation of the recreation reserve, the escarpment and the river flats between it and the Kawarau River no longer represent values which are indicative of ONLs. I do not consider the escarpment or river flats are outstanding in their own right, nor do I consider they are a legible part of the wider ONL. Instead I consider they are more closely linked to the upper terraces and escarpments which have a residential character.

38. I consider that the vegetated banks of the Kawarau River and its confluence with the more vegetated, cascading portion of Hayes Creek adjacent to the slopes of Morven Hill *do* exhibit outstanding natural qualities and are part of an ONL. I consider the landscape category boundary is more appropriately located:

- On the northern and western edge of the Kawarau River's associated vegetation;
- On the southern edge of the lower portions of Hayes Creek near its confluence with the Kawarau River leading between the western foot of Morven Hill and the escarpment, deviating to the east to meet Morven Hill near the line of pylons.

39. I include a plan of where I consider the landscape category boundary should be amended and included in the PDP as **Attachment C**.

PROPOSED REZONING

40. I understand the submitter seeks to rezone all of the site MDR. The Section 42A report prepared by Anita Vanstone provides a detailed description of how this rezoning may occur. Ms Vanstone accepts the evidence of Ms Mellsop and does not support the realignment of the landscape category boundary such that it follows the true left of the Kawarau River. Her recommendations are based on the assumption that the escarpment and river flats are part of an ONL. Ms Vanstone recommends that the submission be accepted in part.

41. For reasons set out above, I do not consider the escarpment or the river flats to be part of an ONL. Ms Mellsop and Ms Vanstone use the landscape category boundary as a central justification for recommending refusal of the rezoning relief sought under

submission 655. Therefore, in the following assessment I will address the effects of the proposed rezoning on the escarpment and river flats as if they were part of an ONL. This assessment focuses on the effects of a potential 9 – 10 houses which could be located below the road, on the base of the escarpment, if the MDR zoning is extended to include that land.

42. While the series of terraces between the Shotover River, Shotover River Delta, Kawarau River, Morven Hill and Ladies Mile are expressive and retain a level of natural character, the immediate landscape is dominated by the urban character of Lake Hayes Estate, Shotover Country and Bridesdale. The outstanding and natural qualities of the surrounding ONL mountains including Slope Hill, Ferry Hill, Morven Hill, Cecil Peak and the Remarkables provides a sense of open relief and a high degree of visual amenity to these otherwise urban areas. The river flats between the Kawarau River and existing urban development act as an open buffer between the urban and outstanding landscapes.
43. I consider that the existing roads, Bridesdale garden allotments and their sheds, the trail parking area, network of walking and cycling trails and the potential effects associated with the QLDC owned recreation reserves, make the river flats in a period of transition from a pastoral character to an urban parkland character. The existing visual amenity values of the river flats is central to its function as the frontispiece to the more outstanding areas of the Remarkables/Kawarau River/Ben Cruchan/Morven Hill ONL from some viewpoints. This visual amenity is publicly experienced from elevated parts of the Queenstown Trail and from the tracks associated with the Bridesdale land. Views across the river flats from the public riverside trail are strongly affected by the level of development which has occurred in Lake Hayes Estate and Bridesdale (including the allotments and future sheds).
44. The river flats between the Bridesdale garden allotments and the Queenstown Trail compose an area of approximately 17ha. While I consider this open area has very little outstanding natural qualities, the more southern parts do have value in its open character and contribution to the overall visual amenity of the landscape. I consider the land between the garden allotments and the existing development on the crest of the escarpment offers little in terms of its contribution to this open character and visual amenity. I walked this land on several occasions and the natural character of the lands east of the site associated with Morven Hill and Hayes Creek are significantly more appreciable in their natural in character. I acknowledge that the natural character of the escarpment will be enhanced as native planting matures,

however it will continue to be wedged between an urban and urban park like landscape character.

45. If the MDR zoning were approved and 9 -10 houses were to be built below the existing road near the base of the escarpment, the main effect would be on views from the road and footpath towards the Remarkables ONL (**Image 3**) as the houses would likely screen some of the lower portions of this view. This view would be held from within an already urbanised environment which at present will be affected by the garden allotments and associated sheds and I do not consider the overall visual amenity of the landscape would be adversely affected. This view to the south would continue to be available and unaffected from the trails to the east of the road. Houses below the road as viewed from the riverside trail will be visually absorbed against the escarpment and will not adversely affect any views from the trail and these 9 – 10 houses would be seen behind the garden allotment sheds.
46. Overall, I consider development of the density allowed under the propose MDR zoning could occur on this land without adversely affecting the landscape and visual amenity values of the wider ONL.

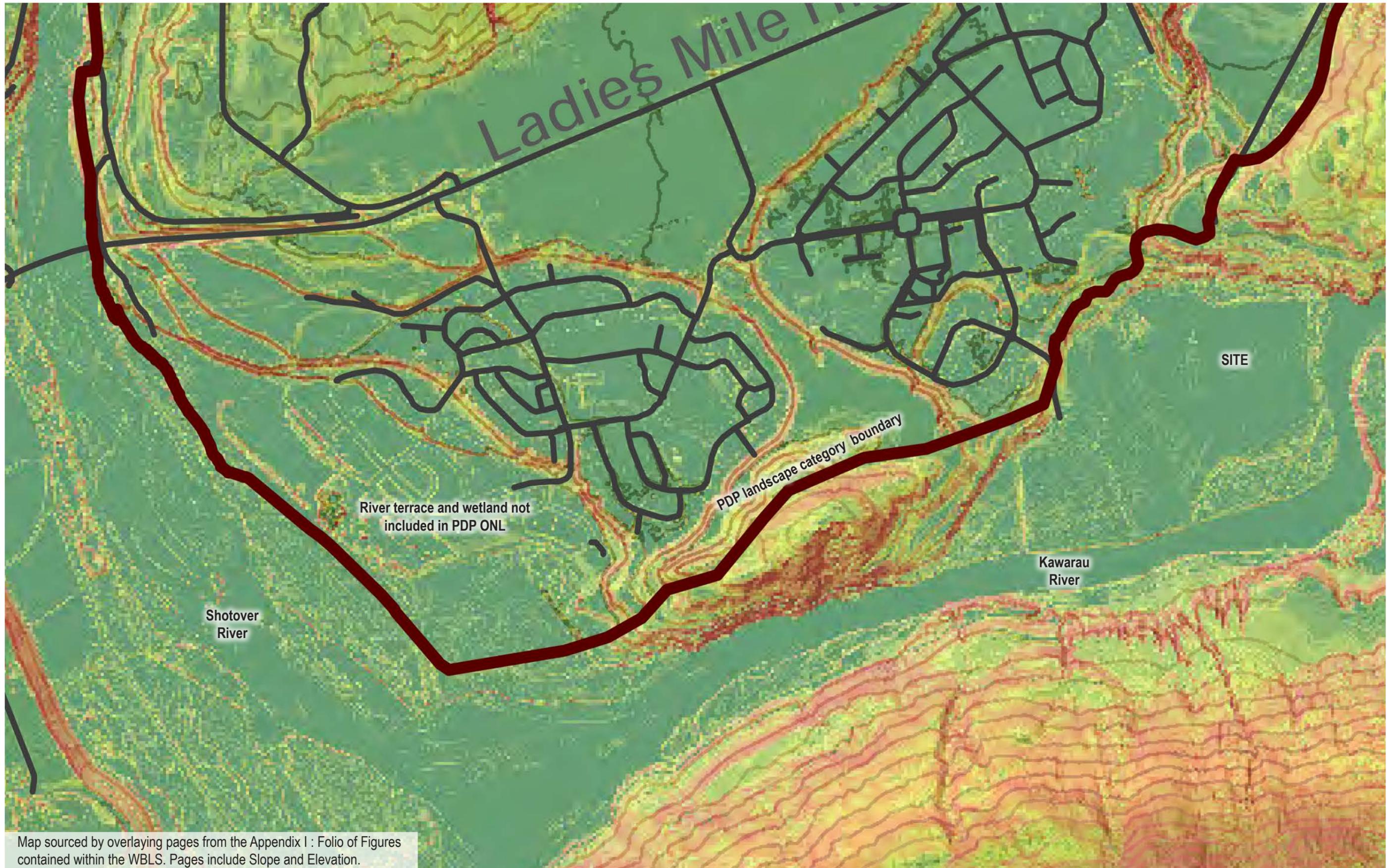
RECOMMENDATIONS

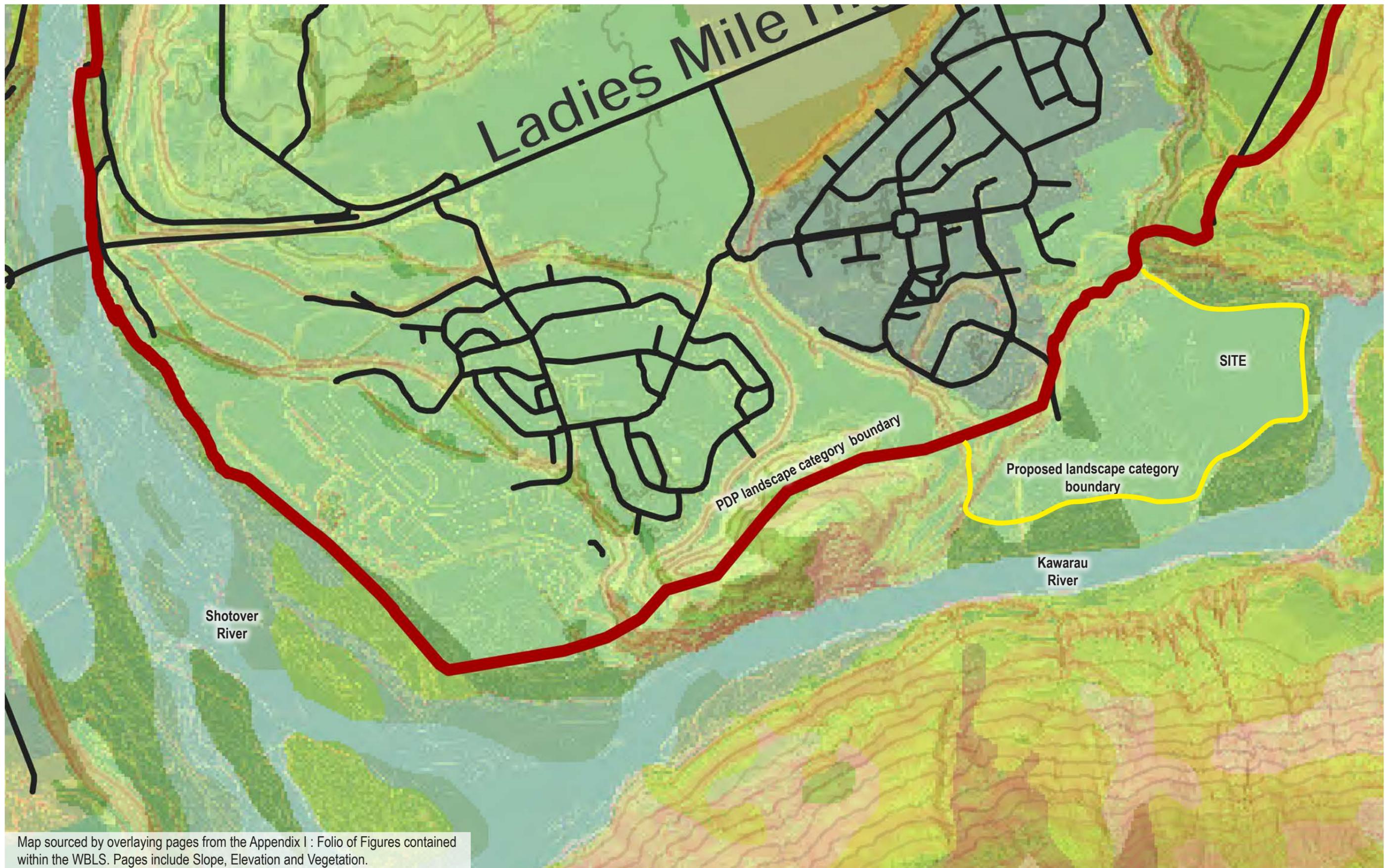
47. I recommend the landscape category boundary be amended to omit the escarpment and river flats. This category boundary should include PT439 and near its base closely follow the vegetated margins on the true left of the Kawarau River, meeting the confluence of Hayes Creek to follow the vegetated margins on the true right of Hayes Creek to meet the western toe of Morven Hill.
48. The Bridesdale Land north of the garden allotments show in in **Attachment D** should be rezoned MDR.

Stephen Skelton

Landscape Architect
13 June 2018







Map sourced by overlaying pages from the Appendix I : Folio of Figures contained within the WBS. Pages include Slope, Elevation and Vegetation.







IMAGE 1: Taken on 13 May 2018.



IMAGE 2: Taken on 13 May 2018.



IMAGE 3: Taken on 13 May 2018.