

Helen Mellsop for QLDC – Summary of Evidence, 15 May 2017
Upper Clutha Mapping – Hearing Stream 12

1. I have been engaged by Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**) to provide evidence in relation to landscape matters regarding requests for rezoning and landscape boundary changes in the Upper Clutha area of the Queenstown Lakes District (**District**).

2. The District includes some of the most spectacular landscapes in New Zealand. These landscapes are highly valued by both residents and visitors, and are vital to the economic value of tourism. The Upper Clutha Basin has been formed by glacial and fluvial processes similar to those evident in the Wakatipu Basin but it has a different character. It is more open and expansive, it has a greater number of working farms, and a stronger pastoral character. In my opinion the landscape characteristics and values of the Upper Clutha that require protection and enhancement include:
 - (a) the wild and remote character of the high mountain ranges, many of which are protected within the conservation estate;
 - (b) the openness, high natural character and visual coherence of high country farming land, including the Pisa and Criffel Ranges, the Mt Cardrona/Middle Peak/Roys Peak range, the Grandview range east of Lake Hawea, and the ranges surrounding Lake Hawea, Lake Wanaka and the Matukituki Valley;
 - (c) the legibility and natural character of the distinctive roche moutonnée within the basin including Mount Iron, Mount Barker, Mount Brown and those in the Matukituki Valley;
 - (d) the natural character of the Upper Clutha's lakes and rivers and their margins, particularly those that are Outstanding Natural Features (**ONFs**) or within Outstanding Natural Landscapes (**ONLs**);
 - (e) the legibility, openness, and pastoral or indigenous vegetated character of the Upper Clutha Basin outwash plains, moraines, river terraces, outwash fans and fluvial escarpments; and
 - (f) the natural character and visual amenity of the approaches to and landscape setting of townships within the basin – Wanaka, Albert Town, Lake Hawea, Luggate, Cardrona and Makarora – including the contrast between urban and rural/natural environments.

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3. I consider that the Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) approach of mapping and confirming the location and boundaries of the outstanding natural landscapes and features in the District is a sound one. On the whole I concur with the Upper Clutha landscape classifications and boundaries contained in the notified PDP.

 4. In response to submissions, I have recommended changes to the boundaries of ONL or ONF in six locations. Some of these changes are relatively minor.¹ The most substantial are:
 - (a) the recommended exclusion of flatter rolling downlands in Maungawera Valley from the Mount Maude/Mount Gold/Mount Burke ONL,² and
 - (b) the exclusion of the glacial meltwater channels and alluvial terraces between the Clutha River and Dublin Bay Road from the Clutha/Hāwea confluence ONL.³

 5. I have also recommended a change to the classification of the Clutha River corridor and Clutha/Hāwea confluence from ONF to ONL. I consider that the outstanding landscape extends further than the margins of the Clutha River and the lower Hāwea River, which are identified as ONFs.⁴

 6. A number of submissions to the PDP have sought rural lifestyle zoning within or immediately adjacent to ONLs or ONFs. The majority of these rezonings would, in my view, result in significant impacts on the qualities and characteristics that render these sensitive landscapes outstanding. I therefore oppose, from a landscape perspective, the rural lifestyle rezonings that are sought by Jeremy Bell Investments Ltd (820) and Lake McKay Station (484) at the northern end of the Pisa and Criffel ranges, by Lesley and Jerry Burdon (581) on the western shores of Lake Hāwea, and by Allenby Farms Ltd (502) at Mount Iron. I consider that these landscapes cannot accommodate change of the type or extent sought.

 7. In contrast, I consider that both Glen Dene Homestead (384) and the Lake Hāwea Holiday Park (282), on the western shore of Lake Hāwea, have some potential to accommodate additional development without degrading the natural character and visual amenity of the ONL they are located in. However in my view the rezonings as sought (Rural Lifestyle and Rural Visitor, respectively), would not ensure that inappropriate development was avoided in the ONL.

1 The minor changes relate to Submissions 110, 206, 502 and 482.

2 Submission 791.

3 Submissions 400 and 531.

4 Submission 400.

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8. In my view either a sharp boundary between intensive urban form and working rural land, or a buffer of rural living activity with substantial retained open space, can be appropriate means of maintaining a legible urban boundary and protecting rural character and amenity. There are a number of rezoning requests that would not, in my opinion, maintain an appropriate distinction between urban and rural areas in the Upper Clutha or adequately protect the rural areas of the Upper Clutha basin from cumulative adverse landscape and visual effects. On this basis I do not support the request by Streat Developments Ltd (697) to extend Township zoning south of Cemetery Road at Lake Hawea township, or the request by Wakatipu Holdings Ltd (314) to rezone land north of Luggate township to Rural Lifestyle.
9. With respect to Wanaka township, I consider that the following rezoning requests would not maintain an appropriate distinction between urban and rural areas or protect the quality and character of the urban fringe landscape:
- (a) the extension of the Urban Growth Boundary to Ruby Island Road north-west of the township (sought by submitters 322, 413 and 692);
 - (b) Rural Residential zoning south of Studholme Road (sought by submitters 776, 369 and 332); and
 - (c) Rural Residential zoning along Riverbank Road to the west of the township (sought by submitters 152, 17, 733, 741-743, 745, 747, 749, 750, 753 and 756).
10. The Lake Wanaka terminal moraine ridge that encloses central Wanaka is a visually prominent and geologically significant feature that provides a natural landscape setting for and containment of the town. In my view the Large Lot Residential zoning of the moraine crest at The Plantation sought by Michael Beresford (submission 149) and the Low Density Residential (**LDR**) zoning sought at Sticky Forest by Alistair Munro (submission 3) would both significantly degrade the integrity and naturalness of this important landscape feature. The terminal moraine is highly sensitive to the cumulative adverse effects of additional residential development.
11. There are a number of rezoning requests that I consider could be absorbed without significant degradation of the District's landscape character or visual amenity. I do not oppose rezoning of land between Lake Hawea township and

Cemetery Road to Township zone,⁵ although I note that rezoning of existing rural residential areas could adversely affect the visual and rural amenities of current property owners.

12. I also support LDR zoning of the Orchard Road Holdings Ltd land on the eastern boundary of Wanaka township,⁶ which in my view would form a logical and coherent edge to urban Wanaka, and am in partial support of the LDR development sought by Michael Beresford adjacent to Northlake Special Zone.⁷ There are however a number of landscape issues that are not adequately addressed in relation to the second area of proposed LDR zoning by Beresford, including the visual and physical integrity of the terminal moraine ridge and the amenity of the adjoining parts of Northlake Special Zone.
13. On the south-west fringes of Wanaka I consider that the Rural Lifestyle zoning sought by Hawthenden Farm (776) and by the landowners south and west of Studholme and Cardrona Valley Roads (160, 161, 227, 254, 322, 783 and 784) would ensure that a transitional rural living character was maintained on this edge of urban Wanaka. In my view, this area could accommodate change to a rural lifestyle density (a one-hectare minimum and two-hectare average lot size) of rural living without significant adverse effects on landscape character or visual amenity.
14. I also do not oppose the extension of Rural Residential Zoning sought by Lake McKay Station (483) on the edge of Luggate township. I consider it could be absorbed without significantly degrading the character of either the township or the surrounding rural landscape.
15. In response to the hearing panel's minute dated 11 May I have attached to this summary an amended version of Figure 6 in my rebuttal evidence, which shows more of the land on the Central Otago District Council (**CODC**) side of the district boundary and the ONL boundary of the Pisa Range within CODC.
16. In my understanding the classification of landscapes within CODC was undertaken in 2013 as part of Plan Change 5A to the CODC District Plan. At this time, I understand that consent had already been granted to subdivide land immediately east of the QLDC boundary into rural living lots ranging in size between about 4 to 10 hectares. Prior to this subdivision, rural living development

5 Submissions 697, 460, 462 and 771.

6 Submission 91.

7 Submission 149.

had also been consented further to the south, on the Queensberry Hills part of the Pisa Range.

17. I was not involved in any way with Plan Change 5A and do not have any knowledge of the reasoning behind the location of the ONL boundary in the north-eastern part of the Pisa Range. However in my professional opinion, the extent of existing and consented rural living development on the lower slopes of the Pisa Range within CODC would have precluded this land being part of the Pisa Range ONL. The existing and potential built form, roads, earthworks and domestic activities significantly reduce the natural character of this part of the landscape. The extent of human modification means that, in my view, it could not be included as part of an ONL.
18. I consider it appropriate that the boundary of the ONL within Queenstown Lakes District follow the district boundary to connect with the ONL within CODC. As I have stated in my evidence in chief, I concur with the finding of the Environment Court⁸ that the land immediately east of the district boundary is part of the ONL, despite the presence of consented residential development on the same landform within CODC.

Helen Mellsop
15 May 2017

⁸ *Bald Developments Ltd v Queenstown Lakes District Council* EnvC Christchurch ENV-2007-CHC-242, 11 August 2009 at paragraph 47.