

Before a Hearings Panel appointed by the Queenstown Lakes District Council

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

And In the Matter of a submission on the Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Council
Intensification Variation by Geoff Currie

Introduction

1. My full name is Geoffrey Christopher Currie.
2. I am the director of Minaret Peaks Limited (MPL) which owns the property at 45 Warren Street, Wanaka (Property).
3. Along with many other properties in the area, our property is within the vicinity of Bullock Creek and within the existing Medium Density Residential Zone (MDRZ) of the QLDC Proposed District Plan (PDP) and therefore within the zone affected by the proposed Urban Intensification Variation (Variation).
4. I lodged a submission on the Variation (Variation) to the PDP.

Scope of Evidence

5. I have read the Council staff section 42A report and supporting evidence. I comment on this material through my evidence.
6. I note the relief sought in my submission includes retaining the status quo for height limits both within the Wanaka Town Centre Zone (WTC) and the MDRZ, with reference to high quality urban design outcomes that are consistent with the existing character of Wānaka, which is characterised by low rise buildings, open spaces and sunny aspects.
7. The s 42A report states that in the author's view, the provisions as proposed, including density and height standards, will provide a more enabling rule framework to enable higher density development in the urban environment.
8. The s 42A report states that the author considers Policy 6 of the NPS-UD to be of relevance and that decision-makers are to have particular regard to the planned urban built form anticipated by the NPS-UD, and that changes in amenity are not an adverse effect. However the author ignores the details of this policy which provide the changes may detract from amenity values appreciated by some people but improve amenity values appreciated by other people, communities, and future generations, including by providing increased and varied housing densities and types. Numerous submissions have pointed out that land and development costs in the WTC and MDRZ are such that the PDP will not result in increased and varied housing densities and types. Instead the increased height and bulk of buildings will result in only a detraction from the currently appreciated amenity values of low rise buildings, open spaces and sunny aspects.
9. The s 42A report fails to address the economic barrier to achieving increased and varied housing densities and types in the WTC.
10. The s42A report also fails to address that a large part of the WTC is within a flood zone and with ground conditions unsuitable to high rise development, perhaps due to the authors unfamiliarity with Wanaka's flooding history.

11. Lakeside resort towns should have building height limits to protect their character for several compelling reasons—cultural, environmental, economic, and aesthetic:
12. Preserving Scenic Beauty and Natural Views - The primary draw of lakeside towns is their stunning natural surroundings—mountains and the lake itself. Tall buildings can obstruct these views for residents and visitors alike. Once the skyline is altered, the sense of openness and tranquility that defines these towns can be permanently lost.
13. Maintaining Small-Town Charm and Scale – Wanaka thrives on a village-like charm, where buildings are low-rise, streets are walkable, and architecture harmonizes with nature. An increase in height limits will introduce an urban feel that will clash with the cozy, laid-back atmosphere tourists come to experience.
14. Environmental and Ecological Considerations - Lakeside ecosystems are fragile. Taller buildings require more infrastructure (roads, parking, utilities), which can strain the environment. Height limits help prevent overdevelopment that leads to runoff into lakes, loss of green space, and disturbance of wildlife habitats.
15. Supporting Sustainable Tourism - Visitors choose Wanaka for its peaceful, unspoiled character. Overdevelopment—especially vertical—can diminish that experience. By limiting building heights, towns protect their long-term tourism appeal, encouraging repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth.