

Before Queenstown Lakes District Council

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In the matter of                      The Resource Management Act 1991

And    The Queenstown Lakes District proposed District Plan Topic 08  
Resort Zones

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF RICHARD BRETT THOMSON FOR**

Jack's Point Residential No.2 Ltd, Jack's Point Village Holdings Ltd, Jack's Point Developments Limited, Jack's Point Land Limited, Jack's Point Land No. 2 Limited, Jack's Point Management Limited, Henley Downs Land Holdings Limited, Henley Downs Farm Holdings Limited, Coneburn Preserve Holdings Limited, Willow Pond Farm Limited (#762, #856 and #1275)

Jack's Point Residents and Owners Association (#765, and #1277)

Dated 3 February 2017

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**anderson  
lloyd.**

**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

- 1 My full name is Richard Brett Thomson.
- 2 I am Design Manager and Director of RBT Design Ltd, specialising in master planning, golf course design and landscape architecture.
- 3 I hold Bachelor Degrees in both Science and Landscape Architecture, and I am a member of the Urban Land Institute.
- 4 I have worked in master planning, golf course design and landscape architectural fields for 22 years. I have previously worked as a Landscape Architect for Boffa Miskell in Queenstown from 1995-1999, thereafter as Design Manager for Darby Partners from 1999- 2009, also based in Queenstown. Since 2009 I have run my own consultancy specializing in master planning and golf course architecture.
- 5 During my time at Darby Partners I was Design Manager and worked closely with John Darby on all facets of master planning, golf course design and landscape architecture on projects such as Clearwater Resort, Jack's Point, Michael Hills and Parkins Bay. I worked on Jack's Point for 10 years.
- 6 My Design Management role at Jack's Point was varied, from producing key design documents such as Coneburn Area Resource Study (CARS), Coneburn Development Controls, Design Guidelines for both the residential area and the Preserve as well as the production of Outline Development Plans (ODP). It extended into producing residential subdivision layouts, golf course design, re-vegetation planting, open space planning right down to street furniture design. Another part of my role whilst working on Jack's Point was to manage and direct the master planning of the Village, which slowly developed over the period of 4 years.
- 7 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note. 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**

- 8 I have been asked by counsel for Jack's Point Residential No.2 Ltd and others to prepare evidence in relation to my role as Jack's Point Design Manager 2001 – 2009.

- 9 My evidence addresses the following matters:
- (a) A brief overview of the Jack's Point Village history.
  - (b) Comment on the broad urban design issues as it relates to Education and Innovation Campus (EIC), Education (E) and Village (V) Activities Area and associated site coverage matters.
  - (c) Comment on the retention of an Outline Development Plan or a similar type document referred to in Chapter 41 as a Comprehensive Development Plan.
  - (d) Comment on issues relating to high level urban design matters, the role of the Village, the benefits of an Outline Development Plan process and the benefits of design guidelines.
- 10 In preparing this evidence I have reviewed:
- (a) The reports and statements of evidence of other experts giving evidence relevant to my area of expertise, including:
    - (i) *Jack's Point Golf Course Resort Document (August 2001)*
    - (ii) *Coneburn Area Resource Study (2002 and 2015 update)*
    - (iii) *Design Workshops Village Document 2005*
    - (iv) *Jack's Point Outline Development Plan – Residential Areas (2005)*
    - (v) *Urbanism Plus's Village Document July 2006*
    - (vi) *Jack's Point Village Outline Development Plan (2008)*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 11 Refer to paragraph 9

## **EVIDENCE**

### **Village Background - Timeline**

- 12 In order to discuss the zone and activity areas I briefly outline the context and history of the zone and some of the founding documents.
- 13 The condensed timeline is as follows:
- (a) 1993: Remarkables Station was identified as a future settlement area in Peter Constantine's report.

- (b) Aug 2001: Public consultation document. The land was proposed as more of a Millbrook styled resort with 400 residential lots, a golf course and small village.
- (c) October 2001: Variation 16 (Jack's Point) publicly notified.
- (d) 2002 Coneburn Area Resource Study initiated and identified areas with 'potential to absorb change'. The central valley at Jack's Point was identified as being able to absorb significant change, which is where the Village activity area was designated with an area of 15.07ha
- (e) 2002/2003 Hanley Downs joined the zone adding another 13.88ha to make a combined Village of 28.95ha.
- (f) 2002: Coneburn Development Controls drafted by Hanley Downs, Jack's Point and Homestead Bay to co-ordinate development and development outcomes.
- (g) October 2004 Jack's Point Zone made operative in the District Plan
- (h) 2004-2008: Village design initiated to articulate the vision (Appendix 2)
- (i) March 2008: Village Outline Development Plan lodged and approved
- (j) 2009: Global Financial Crisis and a retracting of the development environment.
- (k) 2016 - Current: District Plan Review.

#### **Village Background – Development Absorption**

- 14 The Coneburn Area Resource Study (CARS) was undertaken to analyse and assess the landscape and its 'potential to absorb change'. This document directed all development decision making by establishing high level development principles.
- 15 The Village was sited in an area with the highest potential to absorb intensive development, being Category 1.
- 16 CARS is still used by Jack's Point Limited and Darby Partners in assessing the location and impact of potential development.

#### **Urban Design Issues – PDP and Consolidation & Addition of Activity Areas in the Jacks Point Zone (JPZ)**

- 17 JPZ always had a combined Village Activity Area 28.95ha with a site coverage of 60%. PC 44 (Hanley Farm) converted its 13.88ha of village activity area to medium density housing.
- 18 The consolidation into one Village is a logical course, thus intensifying the centre of the JPZ Village and concentrating its urban form.
- 19 Through the District Plan Review (DPR) process, I understand that the Jack's Point Village (JP-V) was notified as covering an area of 18.07ha, logically as a way to offset the loss of the Hanley Downs Village (HD-V) Activity Area and will potentially enable more medium to high density Village living as a result.
- 20 Two other activity areas had been proposed. One being the 13.24ha Education and Innovation Campus (EIC) to the north end of the zone and a 5ha Education (E) activity area to the south of the JP-V.
- 21 I concur with Mr Compton-Moens evidence suggesting a consolidation and concentration of Activity Areas has a better design outcome, creating a more dynamic 'centre' or heart to the Jacks Point Zone. However, compressing 13.24ha of EIC into the 5.1ha E is an impossible fit and consideration should be given to looking at enlarging this area.
- 22 Education and campus environments have very low building site coverage ratios of between 15-35%, so some expansion of the E area is a logical area to accommodate the relocated EIC uses, given that they are predominantly open space activity zones.
- 23 From my perspective any expansion and consolidation of the JP-V and creation of the E activity area should still meet the tests of the CARS, that is to be sited in an area that has the 'potential to absorb change' being either a Category 1 or 2. The Village is a category 1 and the E area has been sited in a category 2. As the potential to absorb change diminishes, there is the need to not only, significantly reduce site coverage, increase mitigation measures and incorporate more open space to ensure better integration of any proposed built form into the landscape.
- 24 So if E were to proceed then it is perfectly sited, not only from a development absorption perspective but also the campus activity means its site coverage will be low, enabling a predominance of openspace.
- 25 If the intention is to enable education and other associated activities and there is a willingness and logic to reposition the 13.24ha EIC activity area into the 5ha E area, then I would also suggest that the current E Activity Area, as shown, could be included within the category 2 area to enable those activities, bearing in mind the traditionally low site coverage of those activities.

- 26 As the JP-V design is once again back on the table, which will now include the E area, I believe that some element of flexibility needs to be built into the zone provisions to allow for movement beyond the Structure Plan boundary but with no increase to site coverage, if it enables better overall urban pattern, open space creation, and improved public accessibility. It should also comply with the principles in the CARS document. As we know, the hard lines of the Structure Plan are not always perfect and design opportunities not yet envisioned can be stifled by trying to stay within the artificial line. These finer details are best dealt with via the development of a Comprehensive Development Plan.

#### **Village- Activity Areas & Site Coverage**

- 27 The issue of Activity Area size, placement and site coverage needs to be touched upon briefly.
- 28 Below are some basic calculation or areas and respective site coverages:
- (a) The baseline of the JPZ was 28.95 ha at 60%
  - (b) The JP-V in the PDP is 18.70ha
  - (c) With the loss of the HD-V (13.88ha) and the potential removal of the EIC (13.24ha) and addition of E (5.1ha) I come to a revised JP-V+E area of 23.7ha.
  - (d) That's 5.25ha less than the original baseline
- 29 I consider that if we are discussing future proofing the District Plan (ie ensuring sustainability) and looking at the significant growth in the Basin and if the EIC commercial uses are proposed to be consolidated into the E activity area, then I believe some expansion of the E area should be investigated. From my desktop exercise an expansion of the area by 3.1ha would have no material effect given what an Education Activity Area would already entail, but would allow a bit more flexibility from a site planning perspective. If that idea gained favour then the JP-V and E areas would be 26.8ha at 60% site coverage.
- 30 I see no reason to change the site coverage percentages. As a note, when we were undertaking site coverage and yield studies it was quite difficult to get it as high as 60% without the removal of more open space, which we consider fundamental to the village.

#### **Village – Urban Design Overview**

- 31 The Coneburn catchment was tagged as a future growth area back in the 90's by a report commissioned by QLDC.

- 32 The projected population of Jack's Point is approximately 4,000 dwellings or 10,000 people, which is four times Arrowtown's population.
- 33 The vision was and still is that Jack's Point is a place to live, work and play. A compact, vibrant and dynamic Village with a variety of residential living opportunities, a mix of visitor accommodation experiences and a diverse offering of commercial activities. The Village itself was then enclosed by medium to low density residential housing in the surrounding Jack's Point residential and Hanley Farm areas.
- 34 A key feature of the Village hub was the creation of a 4ha lake purposed for public access and recreational activity. Currently the lake is used for swimming, fishing and small boating activities and is functioning as envisioned by Jack's Point. Therefore, it is a fundamental principle of the future Village development to maintain water quality to the highest possible standard. A Comprehensive Development Plan framework enables the developer to put forward strong development principles. To ensure that water quality is preserved, for example, it might mandate that all storm water generated in the Village should bypass the lake and be piped directly to the manmade wetland to the south, currently used to filter and purify storm water runoff from the Jack's Point residential areas.
- 35 For residents and guests Jack's Point is already a destination for golf and dining and the next progression is as a 'destination' Village, much like Arrowtown is now.
- 36 No Village or city is static. It is ever changing and ever evolving as it meets the needs of its residents and visitors, hence the District Plan Review. The need for a development framework is paramount, as is flexibility in how the developer responds to its residents and visitors. The framework is the bones of the Village. The block sizes, roading configuration, the green network and pattern of open space don't change that much. However, the activities and uses within the Village will be constantly in flux as tenancies change and buildings morph or are repurposed for other uses or activities. For example, Queenstown has slowly changed from a residential Village to a highly commercialised area. Jack's Point will likely be no different. As the needs of the community change so does the Village and the key is having the flexibility and adaptability within the framework to enable change, which is why mixed use zones enable that. The best mechanism I have found to develop this framework is the Comprehensive Development Plan.
- 37 A successful commercially viable and compact Village can only be achieved if Village 'activities' are contained within the Village Activity Area. Of course, there will be extenuating circumstances for some activities to occur outside the Village on a case by case basis. For example, a corner store. But, if there is a significant

bleeding, if you will, of commercial and visitor accommodation activities into the residential area, then the viability and legibility of the Village could become compromised and undermined.

- 38 I understand that the proposed Hanley Farm provisions allow for visitor accommodation in their residential areas, albeit as a restricted discretionary activity. That potential activity compromises the compact Village model, particularly if it became prevalent. We are seeing the effects of that today with the Air B and B phenomenon, which Council is addressing. I am uncertain having given up the Village zone in favour of residential activities, why Hanley Farm would then introduce a Village activity into the residential zone. If a small pod or pods of visitor accommodation is proposed then one would assume that it would be identified in advance and planned for, as is the case with most visitor accommodation zones.
- 39 When you then combine a potential VA with the residential densities as proposed of 25-45 du/ha in Hanley Downs Residential – R(HD)E, adjacent to the Jack’s Point Village then it starts to look like the R(HD)E is an extension of the Village. As a note, the residential area E of circa 25ha is currently twice what the old HD-V was (13.88ha). It would appear that Hanley Farm have removed the Village Activity Area, doubled the size of the zone and have applied village like densities. Such density requires significant planning and design and it has impacts on infrastructure like roading, parking, waste water and access to openspace and stormwater quality.
- 40 Given the density and potential area of hard surfaces the disposal of stormwater becomes a very important issue. One would not advocate disposing this stormwater into Lake Tewa or a natural wetland without significant treatment. I am unaware as to how these issues are currently dealt with in the proposed District Plan provisions.
- 41 Once again, a Comprehensive Development Plan would give Council a good idea as to what that outcome looks like from an urban design/built environment perspective, otherwise, there is too much uncertainty as to what the finished outcome would look and function like, with potentially detrimental and unforeseen outcomes.

#### **The Outline Development Plan (ODP) Process & Design Guidelines**

- 42 I understand that the requirement for an ODP or similar document is proposed to be removed from the PDP. I support the Comprehensive Development Plan concept being included for the Village as part of the zone provisions. Having been involved in both the preparation of the ODP for the Residential area and for the Village, an ODP or similar type of document puts forward a significant amount of design detail not easily prescribed in site standards. Without the design detail,

Council planners and consultants, need to write overly prescriptive standards (and rightly so), in order to give the community a level of control on the physical outcomes. This approach does not always lead to good design.

- 43 The potential issue as highlighted in paragraph 40 and 41 is the exact reason why Comprehensive Development Plans are a much needed tool. Significant potential issues can be resolved once more homework has been done on the design impacts of significant VA in dense residential environments, because at the moment there are too many unknowns.
- 44 Right from the very first Jack's Point document that was produced in 2001, Darby Partners advocated that 'all development to be in accordance with an Outline Development Plan.' The need for that has not changed. I believe that some such variant like a Comprehensive Development Plan should remain part of the District Plan process for the Village.
- 45 When we were planning Jack's Point we had no idea in 2001/2002 what the Village would be like, because at that stage we were designing/planning the infrastructure, golf course, walking tracks and residential neighbourhoods. Rather than write a complex series of zone and site standards we said we'd come back the Council with an Outline Development Plan document outlining all our detailed designs. This gave us time to focus on producing a great living environment, knowing he had flexibility to come back to discuss the idea with Council planners.
- 46 The Village was just an amoeba Activity Area in the Structure Plan, with only a series of design and development principles as a starting point.
- 47 An ODP process was a way of giving Council some assurance that once we had done some work on the Village we would come back, engage with them and present it by way of a resource consent.
- 48 The ODP is a living document, adaptable and able to be updated to allow for changes in how people live, work, play, travel, etc., some of which is unforeseen to us. For example, in 2008 we did not envisage the current demand for an education precinct.
- 49 We engaged with Council staff in 2007-2008 compiling the ODP for the Village. The inclusive nature of the process enabled a better outcome. It was an iterate process as plans were constantly getting modified and adjusted to get a better urban design outcome. This involved input from many urban design professionals over the 4 years. We worked with Urbanism Plus, Design Workshop (Aspen, Colorado) and Intrawest out of Vancouver Canada. Alongside these consultants, we had input from a varied group of architects – Fearon Hay, MAP, Anna Marie Chin and Athfield Architects to name a few, all inputting into and workshopping on the Village urban design.

- 50 This document became the 'vision statement.' Anybody, from a Councillor, planner, resident or investor picking up this document could see exactly what our design intentions were. It is not possible to get that when looking at the site standards and provisions in the District Plan. This is particularly important given the development time horizons we are looking at for such an undertaking. As we know, the players change, but the vision and principles should remain the same.
- 51 I have attached as Appendix 1 some of the sketch imagery generated as part of our design workshop sessions with Architects, Urban Designers, Landscape Architects and Engineers and included as part of our Jacks Point Village Outline Development Plan from March 2008.
- 52 The requirement for an ODP or similar variant like a Comprehensive Development Plan and the Assessment Matters from the Operative District Plan, being Part 12.5.2 (xv)(b) are as relevant now as they were when Variation 16 was approved. Possibly with some modifications and adjustments. This concept is now being advanced as a requirement for a "Comprehensive Development Plan."
- 53 I believe that Design Guidelines remain fundamental to the Comprehensive Development Plan document. Once again, these are not prescriptive site standards like the planners would like, but serve as best urban design principles to guide development. When you look at the Jack's Point residential areas, its success is a direct result of some very basic but fundamental guidelines, backed up by Comprehensive Development Plan and supported by District Plan zone standards.
- 54 Design Guidelines are even more relevant and important in the Village as the complexity of the compact built environment needs more thought in design terms to get the outcome to align with the vision. Such urban design outcomes are best enabled by a design process like a Comprehensive Development Plan.
- 55 The old Outline Development Plan, or new Comprehensive Development Plan served us well at Jack's Point as we moved from planning to design and into development and I believe it should remain in some way shape or form within the District Plan.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 56 The key conclusions of my evidence are that:
- (a) The importance of the Village as the 'hub' for Jack's Point has not changed since we started this process in 2001. Its need to be a vibrant compact village center in order to be successful.

- (b) The removal of the EIC (13.24ha) Activity Area and consolidation into the E (5ha) activity area, with the possible need for E to expand as a result of the removal of the EIC appears as a logical planning decision.
- (c) I support the JP-V areas increase from 15.07ha to 18.70ha, given the removal of the HD-V area and the intensification of its residential zones.
- (d) Village activities, particularly visitor accommodation activities, should not bleed out into the residential precincts and potentially undermine the village's economic viability.
- (e) I believe that a Comprehensive Development Plan and guidelines should be retained in the Jack's Point Zone and apply to all Activity Areas, both village and residential, as it does in the Operative District Plan. The Comprehensive Development Plan is the best mechanism, working in conjunction with the Proposed District Plan, to articulate the framework and pattern of the village as it relates to infrastructure, building height/mass, building typology, building use, lighting, roading pattern, parking, open space and other urban design issues.

**DATED this 3rd day of February 2017**

**Richard Brett Thomson**

APPENDIX 1 – JACK'S POINT VILLAGE SKETCH IMAGERY







