

IN THE MATTER OF

The Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

The Hearing Stream 13 -
Queenstown Mapping
Annotations and
Rezoning Requests

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

Submission #790 – Commonage and Kerry Drive -
Queenstown Lakes District Council

EVIDENCE OF

Stephen Skelton
Landscape Architect
BCom, MLA (Hons), NZILA (Registered)

ON BEHALF OF

Queenstown Lakes District Council

DATE

23 August 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Stephen Russell Skelton.
2. My Evidence in Chief dated 9 June 2017 outlines my experience and qualifications relevant to this evidence in respect of the Queenstown Mapping Hearings of the Proposed District Plan (PDP).

SUMMARY

The Commonage

3. Submission 790 seeks to rezone approximately 1.5ha (17%) of land on the fringe of an 8.85ha site from Rural to Medium Density Residential (MDR). The site spreads across a moderately steep ridge which separates Queenstown Hill's western and southern aspects and is mostly covered in wilding conifers and other exotic tree species. It is currently part of a natural landscape character which extends from the urban edge of Queenstown to the upper reaches of Queenstown Hill.
4. Urban development on Queenstown Hill is highly visible from the township and the site's existing urban zoning may allow development to occur on and near the skyline ridge. This existing zoning will result in the loss of some of the landscape's natural character. I have read Council's consultant landscape architect Dr Marion Reads assessment of the submission. I agree with Dr Read that the relief sought by this submission will not increase the landscape effects of the existing zoning. The more legible upper slopes of Queenstown Hill will remain unaffected by development and the overall roll Queenstown Hill plays in providing a natural landscape context to the township will not be degraded by the existing zoning or by the relief sought.
5. I consider this relief will result in a negligible effect to the landscape's natural character and will have no adverse effects on visual amenity.

Kerry Drive

6. This site exists on the mid to upper, northern edge of the Queenstown Hill's residential areas. It is a steep, irregular shaped parcel of land which is 4,282m² in area and contains mature exotic trees. It acts as a wedge of open land between existing urban development. A pedestrian path passes through the existing LDR portion of the site. 1,943m² (45%) of the site is proposed (PDP) to be zoned Rural while the balance of the site is proposed to be zoned Low Density Residential (LDR). The submission seeks to rezone all the site LDR, which would also require the shifting of the Queenstown Urban Growth Boundary and the Outstanding Natural Landscape category boundary to the north. There is currently a Reserve designation over the site and I understand the removal of this status would be subject to future public consultation.
7. The landscape matters contained within the PDP Objectives and Policies Chapter 4 – Urban Development as I read them are generally concerned with the effects of urban development on the natural environment, rural amenity and landscape values. These Objectives and Policies generally seek to:
 - achieve a sensitive transition between urban and rural areas,
 - provide for development which enhances public access to reserves and open spaces,
 - protect valued landscape features.
8. I consider that the subject site makes a very small contribution to the natural backdrop of Queenstown and that portions of land which are proposed to be zoned Rural offer very little in terms of visual amenity in the context of the wider visible landscape. In granting this relief the urban and rural character of Queenstown Hill and the visual amenity the Hill provides will experience a negligible adverse effect.
9. I understand that as part of future public consultation to change the reserves status and at subdivision application there is opportunity to maintain a public pedestrian right of way through the site and to allow for an alternative access to the Queenstown Hill Track. In my evidence in chief I provided options for alternative pedestrian linkages to the Queenstown Hill Reserve area. This alternative access would bring the threshold of user's natural experience to a lower elevation and present an opportunity for the public to better access another part of the reserve.

10. Council's consultant landscape architect Dr Marion Read opposes this submission because she says the site provides considerable amenity to the residential development in the vicinity. As I understand her central concern is that in granting the relief sought, the existing pedestrian link between Malghan Street and Kerry Drive would be lost. This path passes through the already zoned LDR portion of the site. I consider the relief sought will result in a very low decrease in the amenity of the surrounding residential areas and that the link through the site can be maintained through future applications.
11. I consider that in granting this relief the urban and rural character of Queenstown Hill and the visual amenity the Hill provides will experience a negligible change.



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