

BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL

FOR THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF of the Rural Hearing Stream 2

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF

DI LUCAS

ON BEHALF OF UPPER CLUTHA ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED

LANDSCAPE

21 April 2016

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INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Diane Jean Lucas. I am a landscape architect for the company Lucas Associates, established in 1979, and currently based in Christchurch.
2. I hold the qualifications of BSc in Natural Sciences (Otago), and a Masters in Landscape Architecture (Lincoln). I am a registered NZILA Landscape Architect, and a Fellow of the NZLIA, and have more than 40 years' experience in the industry.
3. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and that I agree to comply with it. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express, and that this evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person.
4. I am very familiar with the Queenstown Lakes District. Following preliminary advice to council during plan development, in 2001 I undertook assessments and provided evidence for UCES to the Environment Court¹ regarding landscape aspects that resulted in the Operative District Plan. That Court identified a tension between landscape values and natural values that needed to be addressed.
5. In the intervening years I have used the ODP to assess many sites and various landscapes in the Wakatipu, Cardrona and Upper Clutha for the Council, for UCES, for Wakatipu Environment Society, as well as for land owners and developers. I have assessed the QL landscapes and proposed a number of 'landscape lines' that have been adopted. I have tested the ODP assessment matters in many areas.
6. I have been involved in development of district plans around the country, including for the council for Rotorua Lakes following the Environment Court's agreement with community criticism of the Proposed Plan's inadequacy for protecting natural landscape values. I have also been involved in landscape assessments of regions, districts and locations elsewhere.
7. For this council I previously prepared a preliminary ecosystems framework² as well as conducting charrettes with communities identifying agreed desired futures³. I have been

¹ WESI v QLDC 1043/98, 1165/98

² *Indigenous Ecosystems. An ecological plan structure for the Lakes District.* Lucas Associates. A report to the QLDC. 1995.

involved in assessing many different parts of the district for consideration of ONL delineation and development effects.⁴

8. I have applied the ODP and assessed an extensive range of projects under it, in relation to ONL, ONF, VAL and other rural landscapes. I have addressed very extensive and well as very small proposals. I have applied the ODP assessment matters /criteria to all.

SUMMARY

9. I have read the background landscape reports by Read, Steven and Espie that inform the PDP.
10. I have read the evidence of Marion Read, a graduate landscape architect, prepared for QLDC for both Hearing Streams 1 and 2. I agree with Dr Read (19 February 2016, para 2(b) that all of the non-urban landscapes of the District are important. I agree with simplifying the landscape classification to ONL, ONF and other rural areas as RLC. However some of the ONL – RLC delineation in the Upper Clutha I assess as not being adequate.
11. Dr Read suggested (19 February 2016, para 3(b), that assessment matters needed to be rewritten “*to clarify the distinction between landscape character and visual amenity.*” The adequacy of this intent, and the adequacy of the resultant PDP Objectives, Policies and methods, are questioned. The high value and high quality of the District’s landscapes are acknowledged but the fact that it is their natural values, their naturalness, that provide almost all of this value and quality has received inadequate articulation in the PDP. This problem begins in the strategic sections of the PDP and expanded in Chapter 21, the chapter addressing the whole of the non-urban district.
12. To adequately address landscape management as per Rural Chapter 21, I have also considered the related Chapters 3, 6 and 33. The RMA requires that outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes be protected. Objective 3.2.5.1 is appropriately to “*Protect the natural character of Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features from subdivision, use and development.*” Policy 3.2.5.1.1 limits this to protecting them from the adverse effects of subdivision and development.

³ eg. Arrowtown 1994 & 2002.

13. The natural values are a crucial aspect of the outstandingness of the ONL and ONF, and are the context and contributors to for the RLC. Yet the PDP Chapter 6 Landscapes does not seek to protect the naturalness of the rural lands of the district, not of the ONL, not of the ONF, not of the National Parks and other conservation lands. Nor of the lakes and rivers.
14. Having reviewed Chapter 21 and its associated chapters, I am extremely surprised and disappointed that the Council is proposing to not protect very important natural values of this crucial district with which it is entrusted. Whilst more explicitly addressed under the ODP, the PDP is deficient in addressing the sustainable management of the natural landscapes of QLD.

ANALYSIS

15. Strategic Directions are stated in Chapter 3, including:

Objective 3.2.4.5 *Preserve or enhance the natural character of the beds and margins of the District's lakes, rivers and wetlands.*

Policies 3.2.4.5.1 That subdivision and / or development which may have adverse effects on the natural character and nature conservation values of the District's lakes, rivers, wetlands and their beds and margins be carefully managed so that life-supporting capacity and natural character is maintained or enhanced.

3.2.5 Goal - Our distinctive landscapes are protected from inappropriate development.

Objective 3.2.5.1 *Protect the natural character of Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features from subdivision, use and development.*

Objective 3.2.5.2 Minimise the adverse landscape effects of subdivision, use or development in specified Rural Landscapes.

Policies 3.2.5.2.1 Identify the district's Rural Landscape Classification on the district plan maps, and minimise the effects of subdivision, use and development on these landscapes.

Objective 3.2.5.5 *Recognise that agricultural land use is fundamental to the character of our landscapes.*

Policies 3.2.5.5.1 *Give preference to farming activity in rural areas except where it conflicts with significant nature conservation values.*

Also,

Objective 3.2.1.4 *Recognise the potential for rural areas to diversify their land use beyond the strong productive value of farming, provided a sensitive approach is taken to rural amenity, landscape character, healthy ecosystems, and Ngai Tahu values, rights and interests.*

(my under-lining emphasis)

16. Chapter 6 is a further strategy chapter providing the overall direction for managing Landscapes. However the Objectives, Policies and Methods for implementing the management of non-urban landscapes are largely contained with Chapter 21, the Rural chapter. The plan structure addresses all non-urban lands and waters as “rural”. Lakes, mountain peaks, National Parks, alpine crags and glaciers, all are addressed as “rural”, and are not farmland, yet the Rural chapter is very focussed on farming.
17. The primary landscape Objective, 6.3.1 references the direction of RMA s.6(b), but inadequately in not referencing the requirement for protection from inappropriate use. In these lakes landscapes, vegetation change whether deliberate or not, such as with the emergence of wilding forests, can be an inappropriate use. There is no policy under 6.3.1 to protect the natural landscape attributes. Nothing to address natural character or the naturalness of the ONL or ONF, let alone of the RCL.
18. As per s.6(b), the landscapes addressed involve both outstandingness and naturalness. From my review, the objectives, policies and methods are entirely inadequate in that they largely ignore the protection of naturalness of ONL and ONF areas.
19. s.6(a) is similarly inadequately implemented. The landscapes being addressed involve very substantial lakes, rivers and wetlands. The natural character of these and their margins is to be preserved as a Part 2 matter. Whilst Objective 3.6.3 addresses lakes and rivers, neither the objectives nor the associated policies make any reference to preserving their natural character. Under Chapter 33, Indigenous Vegetation and Biodiversity, Policy 33.2.3.6 is to “*Ensure indigenous vegetation removal does not adversely affect the natural character of the margins of water ways.*” Whilst this policy is supported, limited to addressing only vegetation removal, it in itself is not adequate to protect the natural character of the many major and minor water bodies that contribute so importantly to the district’s landscapes, including to the ONL and some ONF.

20. Landscape assessment best practice recognises biophysical, perceptual and associative attributes. The Landscape Objectives and Policies inadequately recognise this breadth of landscape value, for example, Objective 6.3.7 in addressing biodiversity.
21. Policy 6.3.1.11 addresses protection of landscape character and visual amenity. Yet this is inadequate without a directive as to what landscape character and visual amenity is to be protected. As per s.6(b) the directive would appropriately be to protect the naturalness.
22. Policy 6.3.1.12 is similarly inadequate in protecting cultural and historic aspects, with “geological features” the only natural aspect recognised. This policy too fails in that natural character, such as geomorphological character, is not addressed.
23. Objective 6.3.2 is to address the known issue of cumulative landscape effects, yet alarmingly does not address naturalness.
24. Objective 6.3.3 addresses ONF areas, but the Policies provide no direction to protect their natural attributes. In my opinion it is entirely inadequate to address landscape quality, character and openness without articulating the objective of protecting, maintaining or enhancing naturalness.
25. Objective 6.3.4 is specifically to address ONL but has no policy requiring the naturalness that underpins the ONL be protected, maintained or enhanced. Given the extensiveness and variability of the ONL areas, there can be no assumption that considerations of quality and character, landscape character or visual amenity will adequately address protecting, maintaining or enhancing landscape naturalness with this policy void.
26. Objective 6.3.5 addresses the RLC, the non-urban areas that are neither ONL nor ONF. I note that 6.3.5.3 recognises the value of openness, and 6.3.5.6 the value of open landscape character. There is however no recognition of natural openness.
27. Chapter 6 Landscapes recognises the value of open space and the problems that have occurred from reduced open character.
28. Objective 6.3.1.7 recognises that urban expansion needs to both avoid impinging on ONL and ONF, but also “*minimise disruption to the values derived from open rural landscapes.*” I note the latter is inclusive of addressing the open rural landscapes that are ONL and ONF areas. It is not limited to Rural Landscape Classification (RLC) areas. I agree that openness

needs to be recognised as a valuable landscape attribute in all of the landscape overlays. For example, the open character of the valley floors of the major rivers feeding these lakes as well as the terraces and outwash surfaces that extend below them.

29. Due to the substantial deficiencies evident in Chapter 6, and the mismatch with Part 2 matters, it is unsurprising that the Objectives, Policies and Methods to address the Rural zone are also deficient. This is particularly with regard to addressing natural character and naturalness, and landscape attributes such as openness and visual coherence. Coherence considerations, regarding the site and wider landscape scales, are essential considerations in assessing change.
30. The Landscape strategy outlined in Chapter 6 is to largely be implemented through overlay methods in Chapter 21 Rural. That is, the ONL and ONF as well as the RLC are addressed. Being largely comprised of natural mountains and lakes, I understand that ONL overlay the majority of the Rural zone. The Zone Purpose (21.1) is “to enable farming”. However, for much of the Rural zone, farming is not appropriate.
31. Addressing the whole of the Rural zone, and seemingly the only overview landscape policy for this very extensive zone, Objective 21.2.1 repeats this directive to enable farming and fails to recognise the importance of protecting natural character, natural attributes or naturalness. Similarly Policy 21.2.1.1, seemingly the only overall policy to address landscape values or those of lakes and rivers, but is to enable farming and does not mention protecting natural character.
32. It is best practice that natural elements, natural patterns and natural processes are all addressed where the landscape values are fundamentally about their natural character.
33. Whilst seemingly intended to address landscape effects, Policy 21.2.1.3 requires buildings to be set back from boundaries and makes no mention of doing this to protect natural landscape attributes, the essential attributes of the District. The amenity considerations are inappropriately narrowed to only visual amenity when all senses should be addressed. Visual coherence and landscape character are not addressed, but would be helpful. The policy appears more concerned with a neighbour’s outlook than with protecting the landscape resource. I note the setback Standards (Table 2, 21.2.1 and 21.5.2) limit discretion to “*rural amenity and landscape character*” with no consideration of naturalness. Considering the Rural zone context, the minimum setbacks as defined are inadequate for sustaining the landscape resource.

34. Policy 21.2.1.6 is the overall policy to address cumulative effects, a known landscape issue in the district. However the policy makes no mention of avoiding adverse cumulative impacts on natural or landscape character.
35. In contrast, ODP assessment matter (E) addressing cumulative effects explicitly addresses effects on natural landscape and effects on visual coherence and naturalness. This I have found very useful in providing a structure for assessment. This and others of the ODP assessment matters/criteria have been found very useful in decision making. For example, refer Bald Developments v QLDC Decision No. C055/2009 appended. The assessment regarding cumulative effects is at paragraphs 151 – 153.
36. The structure and language, the comprehensiveness of the ODP assessment matters provides a “level playing field” for practitioners to assist decision makers. A common set of questions to ensure the full raft of landscape matters are addressed by all participants. It helpfully demonstrates to all the breadth of landscape consideration. Collapsing such matters into some generic language such as landscape quality is not adequate in my opinion.
37. In my opinion the 21.2.1 Objective, policies and the assessment matters are deficient in terms of addressing the landscape resource of the very extensive Rural zone.
38. Objective 21.2.12 addresses lakes and rivers and their margins. With important wetlands in the district, it is unclear as to why wetlands are not addressed as per RMA s.6(a). I note that Policy 21.2.12.5 seeks only to protect, maintain or enhance natural character rather than preserve it as required in s.6(a). Addressing setbacks from water bodies (Table 2, 21.5.4) provides for the very minimal setback distance of 20m as a restricted discretionary activity. However discretion including consideration of open space, landscape and natural character, as well as visual amenity and biodiversity value, is supported.
39. However considering effluent storage ponds (21.5.5), discretionary consideration wrongly precludes natural character.
40. It is of concern that Policy 21.2.12.7 addresses “*adverse effects on visual qualities*” but makes no mention of avoiding or mitigating effects on natural attributes. The focus on visual qualities only is inadequate

41. The Standards demonstrate similar inadequacy for addressing naturalness. For example, some Mining Activities are a permitted activity in an ONL and could through time result in significant adverse effects (21.4.30). Mining rehabilitation is required (21.4.31) to return land “to its original productive capacity”. However returning it to a more natural state may be more appropriate.
42. Table 3, 21.5.16, allows for large buildings (up to 500m²) as a permitted activity, with larger footprints requiring no consideration of natural attributes. Whilst consideration of visual prominence is to be addressed, potential effects on openness is not. These appear to be serious deficiencies.
43. Building 21.5.17 allows for tall buildings in the Rural zone. Buildings are permitted to be 8m tall. With floors typically of 2.7m, a small excavation allows for 3-storey buildings to 500m² as a permitted activity. If the ground slopes, then a building can step up the slope potentially resulting in even greater landscape effects. The permitted regime I consider to be excessive for these vulnerable landscapes.
44. For consent for buildings taller than 8m, discretion is restricted to addressing some landscape attributes, but not naturalness and not cumulative effects. Also there is no encouragement to cluster buildings to help mitigate effects.
45. Considering farm buildings, 21.5.18.2 provides permitted activity status for a farm building for every 25 ha for properties greater than 100 ha. In terms of location, the only method to address naturalness is that they not protrude onto a skyline or above a terrace edge when viewed from neighbours or roads within 2 km (21.5.18.7). However, permitted to 10 m tall (21.5.20), such farm buildings scattered about could have significant adverse effects on landscape and natural character. Important openness can be particularly vulnerable.

ASSESSMENT MATTERS (Landscape) 21.7

46. The principle to address (21.7.1.3) “*Effects on landscape quality and character*” seeks to “*maintain or enhance the quality and character*” of ONF and ONL. Whilst this principle ought to be implementing s.6(b) and thus protecting the outstandingness and naturalness, it does not seek to maintain or enhance the naturalness of the ONL and ONF. In my opinion this is an oversight.

47. 21.7.1.3 seeks to take into account various landscape attributes:

- (a) Addresses the biophysical, but limits this consideration inappropriately. The geomorphological character is reduced to elements of processes having “*a profound influence on landscape character*”. Biota is limited to vegetation. Birdlife is excluded.
- (b) Addresses “visual attributes” rather than perceptual. It is unclear why the soundscape which is an important natural attribute in some ONL areas is excluded. “*Human influence and management*” is included as a “visual attribute” with absolutely no directive regarding its contribution to or detracting from the outstandingness and naturalness of the ONL or ONF. I consider this attribute inappropriate.
- (c) Address appreciation and cultural attributes,
- (d) Considering only (a) to (c) the effects on the existing landscape quality and character are to be assessed. This ‘test’ fails s.6(b) in not requiring effects on naturalness be addressed. Similarly (e) should require that naturalness or natural character not be degraded.

48. By not addressing protection of the naturalness of ONL and merely seeking that development fit in with the existing landscape character I consider puts these landscapes at risk. The ONL mapped for QLD are very extensive and include development nodes and areas where naturalness has already been significantly compromised but that the landscape context and scale are such that the outstandingness prevails. However this is at risk of being significantly diluted if developments need only fit into that compromised state. It is crucial that protection of naturalness, that avoiding, remedying and mitigating effects on the natural character of the ONL, be clearly articulated as being required. The ONL and ONF Assessment Matter 21.7.1 fails to do this.

49. I have assessed many proposals under the ODP assessment matters and found them very useful as a clear guide as to what needs to be addressed. Considering the assessment matters listed at 21.7.1 as the alternative, I am very concerned. There is a complete lack of guidance to potential applicants to gain an understanding of the attributes of the ONL or ONF that a proposal needs to be assessed against.

50. Discussion

51. I have read the documents provided for QLDC, namely the landscape assessment by Marion Read, the peer review by Anne Steven, and the s.42A by Scott Barr. I have read the submission from UCES as well as several other submissions on Chapter 6.

52. Mr Barr, a planner and not a landscape architect, assesses that the PDP is preferable to the ODP. Mr Barr's justification is with regard to efficiency and effectiveness in better meeting the purpose of the RMA. However, in considering the landscapes of the District, I do not agree that the PDP landscape provisions would be more effective at implementing the protection of the ONL of the District. Nor would they necessarily be more efficient or effective at addressing landscape effects as per the 4th schedule with regard to the ONL and other non-urban lands.
53. The PDP proposes addressing non-urban landscapes as either ONL or Rural Landscape. That is, there is to be no specific management for ONL buffer, foreground or transitional landscapes with regard to their amenity value to protect the values of the ONL. As has been recognised in the NZCPS in Policy 15, effects generated on ONL from beyond need to be addressed, not merely effects generated from within ONL. This was demonstrated in the King Salmon case, where the salmon farm was proposed 500m or so beyond the delineated ONL, yet was assessed to have adverse effects on the ONL.
54. Mr Barr notes (para. 1.1) the importance of large landholdings and traditional pastoral farming for rural character. I agree. However he assesses this is a value "*of its own and is distinct from amenity values*". I disagree.
55. Mr Barr supports the proposed RLC. He states (para. 1.1) that it "*recognises the value of rural character and the openness and lack of domestic elements where these are present within the landscape.*" It is unclear what this statement means, re 'the lack of domestic elements where these are present'.
56. Many of the landscapes and landscape units of QLD have attributes vulnerable to other adverse effects, and not only the loss of openness and introduction of domestic elements. It is not merely that they are rural, that is non-urban, that they contribute importantly to the district's landscape resource. Their particular rural character contributes importantly, frequently involving considerable aspects of naturalness.
57. The PDP appears to "dumb down" non-ONL rural landscapes to formulaic could-be-anywhere ruralness. From my analysis, I can accept the non-provision of minimum lot size or residential separation distance. However, to exclude these methods requires robust other methods to sustain the landscape and amenity values.

58. I do not agree with his analysis that *“The assessment matters of the PDP, for ONLs and ONFs, and the Rural landscape, are based on those of the ODP but they have been restructured so as to separate the assessment of landscape effects from those of visual effects. These were confused in the ODP. This is in keeping with best practice.....”* There is no professional requirement to separate visual from landscape. That would be entirely bizarre. I disagree with the s42A statement *“I consider that the assessment matters are effective at implementing these parameters for landscape assessments and are consistent with the NZILA Best Practice Guide – Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management, 2010, where these parameters are derived to assess the equality of the landscape and what parts of it are valued and could be vulnerable to development.”*
59. Direction to protect the natural landscape values should be made explicit in the objectives, policies and methods. That natural elements, natural patterns and natural processes underpin the landscape values of the district requires emphasis. Also natural topography, natural form, natural values, and geomorphological. Similarly valued attributes such as open character, pastoral, broadly visible, visual coherence and arcadian have been very helpful. As mentioned above, generic terms such as visual quality provide little guidance.
60. As mentioned previously, the usefulness of the ODP assessment matters in achieving adequate assessments for consideration has been well-demonstrated over the decades. I note Dr Read’s articulation of such aspects in some sample assessments for council consideration (refer appendix).

MAPPING

61. The landscape lines have been delineated throughout the QD to differentiate ONL, ONF and RLC. Prepared without using first principles, there are some lines proposed that I question. Two examples are given.

WATERFALL CREEK

To address the boundary between urban Wanaka and the Wanaka ONL the boundary should seek to reflect this major system, from the bedrock source through to the lake. The current proposal inappropriately follows Ruby Island Road, near Waterfall Creek, cutting arbitrarily through the middle of an important geomorphological sequence. The very steep flank to Mt Alpha and waterfall results from the remnant glacial hills below. The active fan surrounds them. The Otago Regional Council map (2011, appendix 1) shows the historic flow paths around and between the two remnant hills, and the active debris lobe at the top of the fan.

62. My analysis of this landscape as experienced from various locations does not support the ONL boundary delineated in the PDP. The mapping is not respectful of the outstanding natural landscape values of the Waterfall Creek complex that includes both the dramatic eroding bedrock country above and the deposition complex below. Instead, inclusion in the ONL of the active fan lobe along with at least one of the impounding hills on the town side of Waterfall Creek, along with an encircling old flow path, would be appropriate. I refer to this first hill as Waterfall Hill.



63. Viewed from the lake (see panoramic photo attached), Waterfall Hill contributes very importantly to the ONL. It forms a dramatic feature with a complex vegetative overlay. Waterfall Hill together with the roche moutonnée feature to the north of Waterfall Creek enclose the lower reach of the Creek. The two hills qualify similarly in terms of contributing outstandingness and naturalness to the ONL.

64. Contrary to the previous indicative line, a boundary along Ruby Island Road and around the lakeside base of Waterfall Hill is proposed in the PDP. This lakeshore strip boundary does not address the relationship between town and natural landscape. The important landscape attributes of Waterfall Hill, the active fan and ancient channelling have been ignored in the

delineation. The complex would seem to provide an appropriate limit to the town and a dramatic interface of town and ONL. The inclusion in the ONL of adequate deposition lands south of Waterfall Creek is important to this interface, including Waterfall Hill and the channel and fan surfaces that surround it.

DUBLIN BAY

65. Most land on the slopes to Dublin Bay is appropriately proposed as ONL including on the roche moutonnée or isolated mountain (LT 15) Mt Brown range. However the important Maungawera Fan has been excluded (LT 11d, refer LT map). Via Quartz Creek and Rods Creek, this landform flows out from the confines of the Maungawera Valley around the end of the range to form a spectacular fan with a 5 km long frontage to Lake Wanaka, spilling out to enclose Stevensons Arm. (refer LT map attached) The smooth fan surface is emphasised with irrigated pasture and tree cover primarily riparian, and the Mt Burke farm node.

66. The dramatic geomorphological contrast between the bedrock of The Peninsula just a few hundred metres across the water, and emerging from the Maungawera Valley, the sprawling deposition of the Maungawera Fan cueing to a former glacial era, is now only fed by the diminutive Quartz Creek and Rods Creek.

67. Dr Read and Ms Steven have excluded this important landform.

Appendix 1

Waterfall Creek, Wanaka

Otago Regional Council, 2011, page 39.



Appendix 2

Excerpts from Marion Read's assessments for QLDC:

Damper Bay Estates Limited-6 houses in ONL-District Wide

Damper Bay Paragraph 43

While the natural character of the foreground is modified being clearly farm land (as indicated by fences, stock, tracks and the hay shed) the natural character of the more distant elements appears very high in these views. The approach to Damper Bay from the east is one of increasing natural character as vineyards and farmland are passed and the eastern hillocks appear. The approach from the west has higher natural character, once the lake edge is left, and the appearance of the western hillocks of Damper Bay contribute to this.

Damper Bay Paragraph 45

It is my opinion that the views of the driveways to all lots would detract from the natural character of the views from the Wanaka Mount Aspiring Road to a significant degree.

The appearance of the driveway to Lots 2 and 3 in views from the Wanaka Mount Aspiring Road would be a clear indicator that residential activity was present on the site, even though the actual dwellings would not be visible in the same views. The natural character of the part of the site through which it would pass is relatively high and it would significantly diminish this character in these views approaching Damper Bay.

Damper Bay Paragraph 46

The experience of walking from Waterfall Creek to Damper Bay is, in my opinion, one of moving from a fairly highly modified landscape into areas of increasing natural character.

The central valley of Damper Bay itself has clearly lower natural character than the hillocks to the east. However, in the context of Mount Roy behind it the degree of natural character is still significant. It is my opinion that the proposed dwellings would be sufficiently prominent in views from the walking track to significantly detract from the natural character of these views.

Damper Bay Paragraph 47

The experience of walking from Glendhu Bay to Damper Bay is, in my opinion, one of moving through a landscape of high natural character.

However, as with views from the other side of the bay, I consider that the proposed dwellings would be sufficiently prominent to also significantly detract from the natural character of these views.

Damper Bay Paragraph 48

Views of Damper Bay from the lake from the route travelled between Glendhu Bay and Wanaka are of what appears to be a landscape with a highly natural character.

It is my opinion that the presence of the proposed dwellings would be sufficiently prominent to significantly detract from the natural character of these views.

Damper Bay Paragraph 51

The priority and enhancement mitigation planting is to comply with proposed management controls but there is nothing in them to ensure that the planting does not detract from the natural patterns on the site.

The subsequent delineation of lot boundaries would likely detract from the existing natural patterns and processes and adversely affect the natural landscape character.

Damper Bay Paragraph 52

As the enhancement / mitigation planting is intended to include riparian planting to improve water quality its implementation in this vicinity is likely to enhance rather than detract from the natural line and form of the landscape.

Damper Bay Paragraph 56

In conclusion, it is my opinion that the site has some capacity to absorb development. The inclusion of the six dwellings without mitigation would have an unacceptably high impact on the natural character of the site.

G.Mead-Single house and garage ONL-District Wide

Mead Paragraph 14

No lighting is to be permitted on this driveway and I consider that this is entirely appropriate in such a remote, natural location.

Mead Paragraph 20

The dwelling would be partially visible from a distance, as discussed above and this would be inconsistent with the natural character of the site and the surrounding landscape.

Clevermaker Limited ONF-Single house and garage Roy's Peninsula

Clevermaker Paragraph 17

Effects on the naturalness of the landscape would occur but would be limited in scale and extent. The dwelling is to be nestled into a natural hollow on the hillside and the earthworks necessary to erect it would be largely obscured by the dwelling itself.

The proposed driveway would follow a small valley and is intended to meander along its natural form. While this also would reduce the naturalness of the landscape the design ensures that it would do this to a minor degree.

Clevermaker Paragraph 22

The proposed dwelling would further domesticate the landscape by being located within a natural open landscape. However, in my opinion the location of the dwelling and the intention to revegetate the balance of the site in indigenous vegetation would ensure that this effect would be small.

Clevermaker Paragraph 24

A dwelling, garage and new driveway would be elements inconsistent with the existing natural character of the site. However, because of the lack of visibility and the revegetation of the balance of the site I consider the degree of this effect to be insignificant.

Demonstrating such considerations are usefully applied to the whole Rural zone, excerpts from Marion Read's assessments of VAL areas for Council:

G. Murray-4 lot subdivision and development in VAL

Murray Paragraph 4.4

It is my opinion that any excess fill material should be required to be dispersed as widely as is reasonably possible in order to maintain the natural topography.

Murray Paragraph 6.2.2

The nature of the development is a residential subdivision. The degree to which this will compromise the natural or pastoral character of the landscape is extremely limited, not the least by the 'bony' nature of the site itself which will make domesticating activity limited in scope.

Murray Paragraph 6.3.6

The proposed new access roads will not change the line or form of the landscape, nor affect the naturalness of the landscape.

Murray Paragraph 7.4

In the terms of the QLDC District Plan, the proposed subdivision and development will not have any adverse effect on the natural and pastoral character of the landscape in the vicinity.

(my underlining emphasis)