

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act ('Act')

AND

IN THE MATTER of Hearing Stream 13 – Queenstown Mapping Annotations
and Rezoning Requests

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF AMANDA LEITH
ON BEHALF OF ALLIUM TRUSTEES LTD (SUBMITTER 718)**

9 June 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Amanda Leith. I am Resource Management Planner and hold a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters in Regional and Resource Planning from the University of Otago. I am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute.
2. I have been employed by John Edmonds & Associates Limited, a firm of independent planners and project managers, since January 2017. Prior to this I was employed by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) as a Senior Policy Planner and Senior Consents Planner.
3. As a Senior Policy Planner for QLDC, I prepared s42A reports in relation to Chapters 7 – Low Density Residential and 8 – Medium Density Residential of the Proposed District Plan (PDP). I was also contracted by the QLDC to prepare the s42A report on Chapter 2 – Definitions earlier this year. I had no involvement in the preparation of the PDP prior to its notification.
4. Although this is a Council hearing, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 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.
5. I was not the original author of the Allium Trustees Limited submission.
6. In preparing this evidence I have reviewed the following documents which are specific to this evidence:
 - a. Strategic Section 42A Report prepared by Ms Kim Banks;
 - b. Group 1C Section 42A Report prepared by Ms Rosalind Devlin;
 - c. Evidence prepared by Ms Wendy Banks

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

7. This planning evidence is submitted on behalf of Allium Trustees Limited (submission #718) and relates to their submission seeking the rezoning of 11 Belfast Terrace and 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 10A, 12, 14, 14A, 16 and 20 Manchester Place, Queenstown (hereon called the subject sites) (shown below in Figure 1).

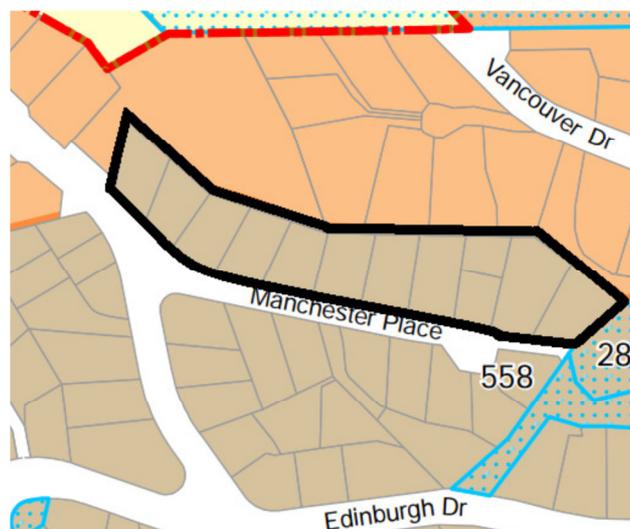


Figure 1: Properties which are the subject of the Allium Trustees Limited submission

- Of the properties outlined in Figure 1 above, Allium Trustees Limited owns 11 Belfast Terrace and 2 – 6 Manchester Place.

BACKGROUND

- Under the Operative District Plan (ODP), the subject sites are zoned Low Density Residential (Medium Density Sub-zone). See Figure 2 below.

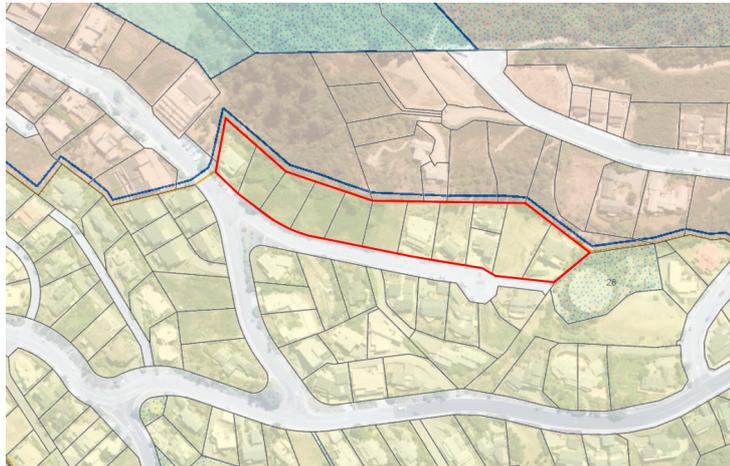


Figure 2: ODP zoning (red outline indicates the subject sites)

- Under the PDP the subject sites are proposed to be zoned Low Density Residential. See Figure 3 below:

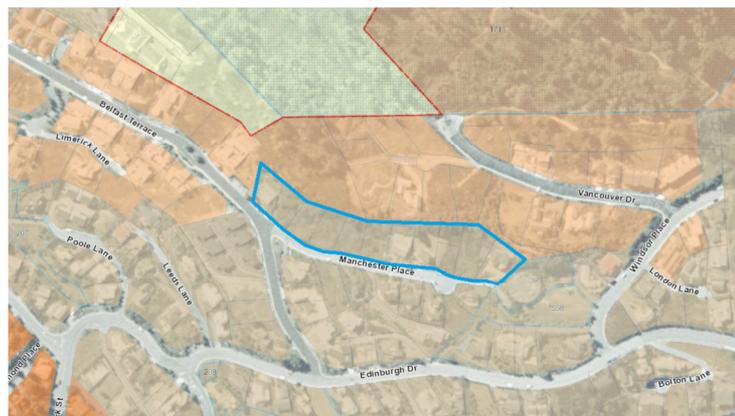


Figure 3: PDP zoning (blue outline indicates the subject sites)

- The combined area of the sites is 7508m². Six of the sites are vacant and two residential units occupy each of 10, 14 and 20 Manchester Place. A single residential unit occupies 12 Manchester Place. All of the residential units are between two and three storeys in height. All of the sites slope up from Manchester Place and would be considered a 'sloping site' for the purposes of the height limit under both the ODP and PDP.
- The Allium Trustees Limited submission seeks that the zoning be changed from Low Density Residential (LDR) to High Density Residential (HDR).
- The s42A report prepared by Ms Rosalind Devlin has recommended that the rezoning request be rejected for three main reasons (summarised):
 - A 'spot zone' of HDR in this location would be inappropriate.

- (b) The location is not on a public transport route and although it is only 1km away from the Queenstown Town Centre, the topography of Queenstown Hill would not make the location readily walkable from the town centre.
- (c) No analysis has been provided in regard to the potential effects of the additional height and development capacity that would be enabled by the HDR zoning on the neighbouring LDR and MDR zoned land.

EVIDENCE

14. PDP Chapter 3 – Strategic Directions seeks to achieve compact urban settlements which are well designed and integrated (Goal 3.2.2, Objective 3.2.2.1 and the associated policies) and has nominated urban growth boundaries for this purpose. Furthermore policy 3.2.2.1.4 encourages a higher density of residential development in locations close to town centres.
15. PDP Chapter 4 – Urban Development seeks to ensure that urban development is coordinated with infrastructure and services, is contained within the nominated urban growth boundaries and provides for a compact and integrated urban form to limit the lateral spread of urban areas.
16. The objectives and policies within PDP Chapter 9 – High Density Residential reflect those of Chapters 3 and 4 and seek to locate high density housing development in urban areas close to town centres, to provide greater housing diversity and to respond to the projected growth in visitor numbers. They also seek to efficiently utilise existing infrastructure and minimise impacts on infrastructure and roading networks.
17. The National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity (NPS) came into effect on 1 December 2016 and must be given effect to through the PDP. The NPS requires that local authorities provide sufficient residential and business land capacity over the short, medium and long term. Queenstown has been identified as a 'High Growth Urban Area' under the NPS.
18. It is noted that Council will release its evidence in relation to its Dwelling Capacity Model on 16 June 2017, therefore it is difficult to ascertain whether Queenstown requires additional dwellings to satisfy the NPS targets or not. Anecdotally, it appears that there is a rental supply problem in Queenstown (eg. employers such as NZSki having to advertise in newspapers and school newsletters for people to house their workers) and its surrounds. This is leading to high rental prices¹ and media stories about many people occupying single bedrooms in rental accommodation. Furthermore, Mr Phil Osbourne provided evidence on behalf of QLDC in Stream 6 that the overall affordability of the District's housing stock is one of the lowest in the country².
19. Further to the above, visitor accommodation is not yet addressed within Chapters 7 – 9 of the PDP and is a significant matter that is likely to be making a big impact upon both the housing supply and values within the District. Although this is not being considered as part of the Stage 1 PDP chapters, it is a factor affecting the District which the zonings and densities need to take into account at some point.
20. One method that can be used (amongst others) to ameliorate housing supply issues is to increase the permitted density of existing residential areas. Mr Phil Osbourne outlines the economic benefits of this in his evidence on behalf of QLDC as part of Hearing Stream 6³

¹ Paragraph 3.9 of Mr Osbourne's evidence on behalf of QLDC in Stream 6 states that there is a median rate of \$500 per week for an average 3 bedroom house in Queenstown

² Paragraph 2.5

³ Paragraph 2.13

which include improved infrastructure efficiencies, reduced transportation costs, agglomeration and associated activity benefits, lower social infrastructure costs, providing more diverse lower cost housing options, greater affordability, improved land efficiencies and greater levels of ownership.

21. Further, Mr Matthew Paetz in his s42A report⁴ on behalf of QLDC in relation to Chapter 3 – Strategic Directions stated:

'the strategic approach adopted in the PDP is to increase the potential for housing supply in existing urban locations to complement the existing greenfield opportunities. Intensifying in existing urban locations can take some of the pressure off greenfield locations, and has the benefit of helping to support walking, cycling and public transport modes of transport. It also contributes to greater housing diversity and choice, as not all people want to live in large houses on large sections remote from services.'

22. Comparing the ODP and PDP zoning surrounding the Queenstown Town Centre (QTC) has found that the above approach as outlined by Mr Paetz has not resulted in any significant changes to the density surrounding the QTC⁵. There have been small extensions to the QTC zone along Brecon Street and around Henry Street; however the residential densities surrounding the QTC, including Queenstown Hill have not altered (taking into account that the ODP HDR – Subzone C is tantamount in density terms to the PDP MDR zone). Taking into account the above approach outlined by Mr Paetz, the strong population growth predictions⁶ for the District and the attractiveness of the residential land surrounding the QTC, given the views and orientation to the sun, this is surprising.

Suitability of the HDR zoning

23. I consider that the residential land located to the northeast of the QTC on Queenstown Hill is of high amenity value. Due to the sloping topography of the hillside, the majority of dwellings on Queenstown Hill have sweeping views to the south over QTC, Lake Wakatipu and beyond. These properties also have good access to sunlight throughout the year, particularly during the afternoon hours.
24. Due to these high amenity attributes and the proximity of the land to the QTC, I consider that the entire Queenstown Hill should be zoned HDR. It is acknowledged that there is not scope via the Allium Trustees Limited submission and the other submissions received on the PDP for the Panel to make this recommendation, however I consider that this is the best fit for the location for the following reasons:

- (a) The land on Queenstown Hill is within walking distance of the Queenstown Town Centre. I acknowledge Ms Wendy Banks' evidence in which she states that the topography of Queenstown Hill will discourage walking and cycling from the town centre to the properties at the upper extent of Queenstown Hill. Furthermore, I also acknowledge that beyond Hallenstein Street the road network is more convoluted and makes a direct route less possible in some locations. However, for the reasons set out below, I consider that in Queenstown there is the potential that a greater number of residents would walk to and from Queenstown Hill than what would be expected in other New Zealand locations.

As outlined in Mr Fraser Colgrave's evidence on behalf of QLDC as part of Hearing Stream 1B, the Wakatipu's age profile differs significantly from the national average in that 52% of the Wakatipu population is aged between 15 – 44, compared to the NZ average of 40%.

⁴ Paragraph 7.16

⁵ This does not include the PC50 land given that this land is no longer included within the PDP

⁶ Outlined by Mr Osbourne in paragraphs 3.13 and 3.15 of his evidence on behalf of Council for Stream 6.

Mr Colgrave also reported that the District's residents are mobile and do not stay in one place for too long, with only 22% of the 18 to 29 year olds living in the District at the time of the 2013 census having lived in the District five years earlier. Of these people over half came from Europe.

With a larger proportion of young to middle aged residents residing in Queenstown the majority of whom only stay in Queenstown for a short period of time, it is considered that there would be a greater appetite for walking or cycling beyond that in the wider New Zealand.

Queenstown Hill is already well serviced by footpaths along the majority of the roads which lends itself to safe pedestrian travel also.

In addition to the above, the difficulty in finding a public car parking bay in and around the QTC during peak times would further promote the option of walking or cycling into town rather than taking a private vehicle.

- (b) It appears that from Mr Ulrich Glasner's evidence on behalf of QLDC that increased density could be serviced by existing Council infrastructure or subject to upgrades. Should areas of the District have their zoning changed as part of the PDP process, Council's Long Term Plan would need to take into account any upgrades to existing services which would be necessary. The costs of upgrades to services could be passed on to the developers via development contributions.
- (c) Higher density housing in close proximity to town centres is sought by the objectives and policies in Chapters 3, 4 and 9. For LDR zoned land to be within walking distance of the QTC is an inefficient use of the land resource, particularly in a high amenity area such as Queenstown Hill.
- (d) With the significant majority of the properties on Queenstown Hill being of sloping topography, the permitted HDR height for sloping sites is 7m. This is the same as the height limit for sloping sites for the LDR zone and less than the 8m permitted building height for the MDR zone. It is noted that it is a restricted discretionary activity to exceed 7m and to build no higher than 10m in the HDR zone, however, one of the matters of discretion is the extent to which the infringement would adversely affect the amenity values of neighbouring properties in relation to dominance, views and outlook and sunlight access. This matter of discretion would ensure that any amenity effects of this nature on neighbouring properties as a result on a building of greater than 7m on a sloping site could be addressed.
- (e) In September 2016 Council resolved to prepare High Density Residential Design Guidelines as part of Stage 2 of the PDP. I expect that these design guidelines will (or at least could) incorporate provisions to address buildings of increased height to support the matters of discretion and help ensure that the mass of buildings can be appropriately ameliorated.

Suitability of the MDR zoning

- 25. Acknowledging that there is no scope through submissions for all of the properties on Queenstown Hill to be re-zoned HDR, I observe that there is scope via the Sean and Jane McLeod (#391) (as well as the Allium Trustees Ltd submission relating to Manchester Place) to re-zone the LDR part of Queenstown Hill to MDR. This option would result in an increased efficiency in the use of the land in such close proximity to the QTC.
- 26. Specifically, in relation to the subject sites which are the subject of the Allium Trustees Ltd submission, there is scope for the Panel to also consider a MDR zoning of the land. Albeit of a lower intensity than HDR, the abovementioned reasons specified to support a HDR zoning of Queenstown Hill are considered applicable to support a MDR zoning of the subject site, in addition to the following reasons:

- (a) The location of the zone would satisfy the objectives and policies of Chapter 8 – Medium Density Residential which seeks that medium density development be located close to town centres, local shopping zones and the like, in a manner which is responsive to housing demand pressures.
- (b) The building height proposed for sloping sites in the MDR zone is 8m which is only 1m greater than that permitted in the LDR zone. Given the topography of the land and the adjoining land to the northeast, it is anticipated that this additional 1m height will still allow for retention of views.
- (c) The MDR zoning of the land would not be a 'spot zone' given that the subject land is bordered on the northern and western sides by MDR. The Manchester Place alignment to the south of the subject land also provides a natural boundary. As does the location of the QLDC water reservoir and pump station (designation 28) to the east.
- (d) The location of the road and water reservoir to the north and east results in any potential interface issues between the MDR zoning and the adjacent LDR zone to be mitigated by the distance in between.

CONCLUSION

- 27. Overall, I consider that the zoning of Queenstown Hill, including the land identified within the Allium Trustees Ltd submission, given its proximity to the QTC and the high amenity values of the properties should be re-reviewed by Council with a view of increasing the density to HDR. The HDR zoning would align with the goals and objectives listed in the PDP strategic Chapters 3 and 4 and to make best use of the land resource in this location.
- 28. Notwithstanding the above, it is acknowledged that there is no scope through submissions for the Panel to recommend the above. Taking this into account, it is considered that although a MDR zoning of the Allium Trustees Ltd land would make less efficient and effective use of this land, A MDR zoning would be more fitting than the LDR zoning currently proposed in the context of what Chapters 3 and 4 of the PDP seek to achieve.



Signed 9 June 2017