

**Barbara Lusk – Submitter #136**

**RE: QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL PROPOSED  
DISTRICT PLAN - STAGE 1 and decisions requested by two  
submissions seeking relief associated with land at Arthurs Point**

1. I am totally opposed to the change within the District Plan that alters the zone for the sites under consideration from Rural General to Low Density Residential and Large Lot Residential as requested by the developers, Gertrude Saddlery and Larchmont Enterprises Limited.
2. In this oral submission I shall cover my long association with Queenstown and with Arthurs Point, background to the purchase of my property at 434 Gorge which overlooks the land the developers want to be rezoned so they can put houses on it, the amenity value of the Shotover loop and the steep land above the Shotover River, the reasons I am opposed to the rezoning requested by the developers.
3. I first visited Queenstown with my grandfather and mother during the second world war. We travelled by train from Invercargill and then steamer up the lake from Kingston to Queenstown. In following years after my Father returned from fighting in Italy and Egypt we would visit for three weeks over the summer, travelling by car from Invercargill. The corrugations on the Devil's Staircase were bone shaking.
4. During our university years at Otago and after marriage, my husband and I came skiing every year. Each day as we came home from Coronet Peak we passed the land we now own in Gorge Rd and talked about what a wonderful site it was. We stopped off one day in 1977 at the Sutherlands house further down

Gorge Rd, knocked on the door and put the suggestion to Mr and Mrs Sutherland, who owned the land, that we would like to purchase it. Mr Sutherland's comment was that they are regularly approached by hotel chains wanting to buy it. And it was not for sale. When we returned a week later to see if they had changed their minds, the answer was positive. We negotiated a price and eventually the land was ours.

5. It was, and is, not surprising hotels wanted it. The unspoilt view across the Shotover is spectacular. It looks into the deep Gorge and to Edith Cavell bridge, the steep face over the river, along to Big Beach and of course, surrounding hills and mountains. This is a landscape of national importance, an outstanding natural landscape.
6. To put a subdivision across this view is a desecration. The Oxford Dictionary defines 'to desecrate' as 'to spoil or to treat with violent disrespect' which is why I use the word desecration because what the developers are proposing will do just that. A row of houses strung across an outstanding natural landscape.
7. My husband, John, and I took sabbaticals from our professions in 1981 and built the house, Canyon Ridge, acting as builder's mates to John Grant, a local builder.
8. For the first years after we built, family and friends lived in Canyon Ridge. We then let it for several years as a short-term rental with hundreds of guests from New Zealand and overseas staying over that period. Without exception the feedback from guests was that the view from the house was unspoilt, exceptional and memorable.
9. My opposition to the Plan Change sought by the developers from Rural General to Low Density Residential and Large Lot Residential zoning arises from my desire to keep that outstanding

natural landscape unspoilt and pristine. But it is not only a selfish desire: the Shotover Loop with its knoll, escarpment and river is seen from surrounding places such as Moonlight, Crow's Nest, Big Beach and Littles Road. Development on these sites as is proposed will reduce the ambience and uniqueness of Arthurs Point for ever.

10. I have concerns other than the spoiling, desecration of a unique outstanding natural landscape.

Reading all the reports produced by experts/consultants commissioned by QLDC, Gertrude Saddlery and Larchmont Development/Enterprises Limited, and APONLS it is obvious there is a range of opinions about the impact of this proposed subdivision. I briefly note the concerns that I have extracted from the reports.

- Environment/Landscape:

- i.) Ms H Mellsop, having recognised “the aesthetic quality and scenic value of the landscape”, recommends that screening planting be done in front of the houses in the development and that building should not proceed until the screening was at least two metres high with taller trees being planted to improve the screening in the long term. While a good idea in theory, in practice, what homeowner is going to allow their view to be cut off by vegetation?
- ii.) Close scrutiny of the developers’ plans shows that the houses, in some areas, will be very close to the escarpment, not allowing for screening vegetation.

- Transport:

- i.) Mr Smith reports that developing Atley road to allow access onto the sites is complicated with expensive retaining walls and

earthworks required and with existing houses along the road being severely impacted both during the construction stage but also long term.

- ii.) The resulting road will not comply with Waka Kotahi's requirements even then and there will be continuing safety issues associated with a narrow road.
  - iii.) Within the development area, access to some sections will be difficult if not impossible.
  - iv.) Traffic congestion across the Edith Cavell bridge is bad now. While the proposed dwellings may not add significant extra load to the traffic, it seems foolhardy to add more traffic to an existing problem. While there is talk of a replacement bridge in the future, that future may be many years away. It should not be relied on.
- Infrastructure
    - i.) It seems that there is no room for essential infrastructure services to run along the sides of Atley Rd to the sites. The solution presented is to put these services under the road. Services fail. Road has to be dug up. Access is compromised. It does not seem a realistic way to deliver electricity and water.
  - Housing availability
    - i.) Ms Evans states that there is currently surplus capacity in the short and medium term both in Arthurs Point and the wider urban area. These 30 + houses are not needed to meet a housing shortage.
    - ii.) What is needed in Queenstown is affordable housing. Houses built on these sites will not be affordable. The sections alone will be expensive because of the costs the developers have incurred to date and costs of development of the total site and

individual sections. In addition, the foundations needed on this difficult land will be substantial and expensive.

11. As a rate payer I am appalled by the costs QLDC has incurred to date in supporting this change of plan: costs including payment for a series of consultants to write reports, three environment court cases, two High Court cases and an appeal where Council tried unsuccessfully to get the decision from the last court case overturned. And this is just the beginning of the costs the ratepayers will have to bear if the decision is made to grant the developers the change to the District Plan they desire: these will include this hearing, the resource consent process and costs incurred by Council over and above the development levy if the resource consent is successful.

I do wonder why QLDC has pursued this change of plan so assiduously and at such a high cost to ratepayers. The advantage to the developers is obvious? What is the advantage to the ratepayers?

**To conclude:**

I have always cherished the wonderful environment created by the Shotover Loop. The mountains, the river and the steep sides cascading down to the river. Whilst the mountains and river will remain into perpetuity, the landscape below and beside them can be irrevocably spoiled by development if that is allowed to proceed. The Outstanding Natural Landscape will be destroyed and can never again be Outstanding. The land will become just another urban suburb.

Which explains why what I seek is that the zoning of the Gertrude Saddlery and the Larchmont Enterprises Limited properties remain as Rural General within the District Plan.