

**BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL  
FOR THE PROPOSED QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT PLAN**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Proposed District Plan Stage 3b submission related to notified Walter Peak Rural Visitor Zone

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF HELEN JULIET MELLSOP  
ON BEHALF OF QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LANDSCAPE – WAYFARE GROUP LIMITED REZONING**

**4 March 2021**

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**Appendix 1 – Rural Visitor Zone Review Landscape Assessment – Walter Peak  
section, Helen Mellsop Landscape Architect, June 2019**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My full name is Helen Juliet Mellsop. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from UNITEC Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Human Biology from University of Auckland and Diploma of Horticulture (Distinction) from Lincoln University. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and have been practising for over 19 years. I am currently self employed as a consultant landscape architect.
- 1.2 Between January 2008 and March 2010, I was a Senior Landscape Architect at Lakes Environmental Limited, a company contracted to undertake resource management and regulatory functions for the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC or Council**). Since forming my own consultancy in 2010 I have continued to provide landscape architectural services to QLDC. I have appeared regularly as an expert witness at Council Hearings and have also participated in Environment Court mediations and prepared briefs of evidence for a number of appeal hearings in the Environment Court.
- 1.3 In relation to the Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) I have provided evidence for Council on mapping and rezoning submissions in the Upper Clutha Basin and parts of the Queenstown area. I have also provided landscape evidence on Environment Court appeals to Stage 1 of the PDP that relate to the strategic chapters and Outstanding Natural Landscape (**ONL**) / Outstanding Natural Feature (**ONF**) boundaries, and on rezoning appeals to Stage 2 of the plan.
- 1.4 My involvement in Stage 3b of the PDP to date has involved:
- (a) provision of the landscape assessment<sup>1</sup> that supported the Section 32 report for the notified Rural Visitor Zone (**RVZ**); and
  - (b) evidence in relation to landscape matters for the hearing of submissions to Stage 3b in May 2020. This evidence related mainly to notified RVZs that already existed (albeit with a

<sup>1</sup> QLDC Rural Visitor Zone review landscape assessment, June 2019.

different zone framework) in the Operative District Plan (**ODP**).

- 1.5 I am generally familiar with the Queenstown Lakes District (**District**), having undertaken landscape assessments for numerous rural resource consent applications in the District between 2008 and 2021 and provided landscape evidence for Stages 1 and 2 of the PDP. I visited the Walter Peak ODP RVZ in February 2019 as part of the RVZ review landscape assessment.
- 1.6 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 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.
- 1.7 The key documents I have used, or referred to, in forming my view while preparing this brief of evidence are:
  - (a) the notified Chapter 46 Rural Visitor Zone and the landscape assessment supporting the Section 32 Evaluation Report for the Rural Visitor Zone;
  - (b) the draft Independent Hearing Panel (**IHP**) report 20.7: Chapter 46, Rural Visitor Zone and Related Variations to Chapters 25, 27, 31 and 36 Temporary Filming Activities;
  - (c) the Environment Court Interim Decision Chapters 3 and 6 of the PDP<sup>2</sup>;
  - (d) the objectives and policies of the PDP in relation to Strategic Direction, Urban Development, and Landscape and Rural Character;
  - (e) the revised Wayfare Group Limited (**Wayfare**) submission relating to the Walter Peak RVZ;
  - (f) the planning provisions for the proposed new zone, the “Walter Peak Tourism Zone” (**Tourism Zone**), the extent of the Tourism Zone showing the proposed Building Restriction

- Area and Overlays, and the section 32A evaluation all filed with the Council by Wayfare on 12 February 2021; and
- (g) Environment Court cases and resource consent decisions, where relevant to the Walter Peak submission.

**1.8** Attached to my evidence are the following documents:

- (a) **Appendix 1:** QLDC Rural Visitor Zone Review Landscape Assessment – Walter Peak section, Helen Mellsop Landscape Architect, June 2019.

## **2. SCOPE**

**2.1** My evidence addresses the landscape implications of the amended Wayfare submission (#31024)<sup>3</sup> to Stage 3b of the PDP. I have provided my view as to whether I oppose the relief sought, or whether I do not oppose the relief sought in terms of landscape and visual effects.

## **3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**3.1** The key conclusions in my evidence are that:

- (a) The Tourism Zone will not protect the landscape values of the ONL in which it is located.
- (b) The notified RVZ for Walter Peak (with the amendments to zone provisions recommended by the IHP in their draft report 20.7) is the most appropriate way to achieve the landscape-related objectives and policies of the PDP.
- (c) The flatter beach slope section of Beach Bay Recreation Reserve has the ability to absorb well-designed low density development that does not detract from the heritage values of the bay. RVZ is the most appropriate zone for this area from a landscape perspective; and

<sup>3</sup> As amended by way of Memorandum of Counsel dated 22 October 2020.

- (d) Extension of the RVZ to the Crown-owned marginal strips on Lake Wakatipu could lead to inappropriate adverse effects on the natural character of the lake margins.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1** I understand that, subject to the IHP recommendations being accepted by Council, the RVZ is intended to provide for visitor industry activities within the rural environment, at a small scale and low intensity. The principal activities envisaged in the RVZ are visitor accommodation and related ancillary commercial activities, commercial recreation, and recreation.
- 4.2** The RVZ provisions (Chapter 46) recommended by the Panel through the Stage 3 Council Hearing process, and their locations on the plan maps (which at this time is not Walter Peak), allow for a relatively limited extent of visitor industry development within the rural areas of the District, including in remote locations. Within those areas identified as being able to accommodate development, while protecting the values of the surrounding landscape (areas of lower landscape sensitivity), the zone provisions are relatively enabling. Activities envisaged within the RVZ have a controlled activity status, subject to compliance with development standards. In areas of the RVZ that have less capacity to absorb development (areas of moderate-high or high landscape sensitivity), the zone rules are more stringent, with discretionary or non-complying activity status.

#### **5. WALTER PEAK REZONING**

##### ***Wayfare Group Limited - #31024***

- 5.1** In its original submission to the Stage 3b notified Walter Peak RVZ, Wayfare sought that the ODP RVZ provisions be rolled over into the PDP or that the provisions of Chapter 46 be amended to have the same effect as the ODP provisions. Alternatively, Wayfare sought a bespoke zone for the area.

- 5.2** In April 2020 the submitter sought, and was granted an adjournment of the hearing of their submission, due to the impacts of COVID-19. The amended relief now sought by Wayfare is limited to a rezoning from the notified RVZ, to a bespoke Tourism Zone only, outlined in memoranda dated 22 October 2020 and 12 February 2021.
- 5.3** While the amended submission still formally seeks removal of the ONL from the site, it is understood that the submitter is not pursuing that relief through its package of information filed with the Council.
- 5.4** The key features of the Tourism zone that are relevant to this landscape evidence include:
- (a) Inclusion of a structure plan that identifies a 'Homestead Area' in Beach Bay, Building Restriction Areas (**BRAs**) on the toe slopes of Walter Peak and on the Crown-owned marginal strip adjoining Lake Wakatipu, and an extended Walter Peak Water Transport Overlay (**WPWTO**) in Beach Bay;
  - (b) Extension of the Tourism Zone to include the legal roads and the Crown-owned marginal strips on the edges of the notified RVZ zone, and the Department of Conservation (**DOC**) recreation reserve at Beach Bay;
  - (c) Policy direction to enable visitor accommodation and commercial recreational activities within the Tourism Zone, through a controlled activity status for buildings, while protecting the landscape values of the surrounding ONL;
  - (d) Providing for buildings within areas of High, Moderate-High and Lower Landscape Sensitivity (as identified in the notified RVZ, but not in the Tourism Zone) as a controlled activity;
  - (e) Providing for residential activity that is not ancillary to visitor industry activities, and for buildings within the marginal strip BRA, as discretionary activities;
  - (f) Providing for activities additional to those in the notified RVZ for the WPWTO, as restricted discretionary activities. These include a quay, pier, marina, mooring and signage;
  - (g) Standards providing for higher buildings (8 metre limit) than the notified RVZ zone (6 metres, or 4 metres for the

- WPWTO), and no standards for building size, zone boundary setbacks or building materials and colours;
- (h) Inclusion of the Water Peak Tourism Zone as an ‘Exception Zone’ in Chapter 3 and exclusion from the ONL policies in Chapter 6; and
- (i) Controlled activity status for unit title or leasehold subdivision of any development approved by land use consent.
- 5.5** The Wayfare submission is not supported by an independent landscape assessment evaluating how the proposed relief appropriately protects landscape values. Relevantly, the submitter’s section 32AA report states that “*Accordingly, the amended proposal does not protect or seek to maintain as-is existing landscape values, but better enables landscape change and improvement that has been long accepted by the community as appropriate for the District*”.
- 5.6** My assessment of the landscape values, landscape sensitivity and landscape absorption capacity of the notified Walter Peak RVZ and surrounding ONL is contained in the Walter Peak section of my June 2019 RVZ report (refer to **Appendix 1**). This assessment identified the landscape context of the notified RVZ, described and rated the biophysical, sensory/perceptual and associative attributes of the landscape, and evaluated the key attributes that contribute to the values of the landscape (Sections 1.1.1 to 1.1.4). In these respects, it is consistent with the PDP Chapter 3 Values Identification Framework for ONF/L (Policy 3.3.XA) and the Landscape Assessment Methodology (Policy 3.3XB) recommended to the Environment Court following expert conferencing. The report analysed the capacity of the Walter Peak RVZ to absorb visitor accommodation and tourism-related activities and commercial tourism activities (Section 1.1.6), but did not specifically consider capacity to absorb other activities listed in the recommended Values Identification Framework policy, including rural living and intensive agriculture.

- 5.7** I supported the notified RVZ at Walter Peak from a landscape perspective with the exception of the lack of control over building coverage within the lower landscape sensitivity area and the lack of standards for building external appearance.
- 5.8** I understand that since completing my 2019 landscape assessment, construction of the staff accommodation village, consented under RM181300, has commenced and its use for visitor accommodation has been consented (RM200774). This village is located within the lower landscape sensitivity area of Walter Peak (as identified in my 2019 landscape assessment) and consists of single storey recessive buildings set within relatively spacious landscaped surrounds, and partially screened from the road. A certificate of compliance for a 6-metre high telecommunications tower has also since been issued (RM191271). This is located just inside the boundary between the lower landscape sensitivity and high landscape sensitivity areas on the southern side of Von Hill. These recent developments do not alter my assessment of the landscape attributes, values or absorption capacity, outlined in my 2019 landscape assessment.
- 5.9** The proposed Tourism Zone does not use the notified landscape sensitivity mapping as a tool to manage landscape values. The proposed zone provisions would enable built development in the majority of the zone (about 142 of the approximately 156 hectares) as a controlled activity, to a height of 8 metres and with no building size or site coverage restrictions. This includes areas notified as High and Moderate-High Landscape Sensitivity. Under the notified RVZ, buildings in these locations were non-complying (High Landscape Sensitivity) and discretionary activities (Moderate-High Landscape Sensitivity).
- 5.10** While the objective, policies and matters of control proposed for the Tourism Zone are intended to provide for development '*compatible with landscape, cultural, heritage and visual amenity values*', there would be no ability for Council to decline a controlled activity resource consent application. In addition, the proposed policy relating to protection of the landscape values of the ONL (X.2.1.2) refers to the '*Outstanding Natural Landscape surrounding the zone*' and does not recognise that

the zone is actually a part of this ONL and that biophysical, perceptual and associative attributes found within the zone contribute to the values of the wider ONL. These include the biophysical, naturalness, expressiveness and scenic attributes of Von Hill peninsula, the experiential attributes provided by guided tours at Walter Peak, and the heritage values associated with the original high country farm.

- 5.11** In my view, development enabled by the proposed Tourism Zone could have significant adverse effects on the landscape values of the northern Eyre Mountains ONL. Development within the areas, shown as having High Landscape Sensitivity on the notified planning maps, could modify the landform and character of the distinctive ice-eroded hill and beach terraces, degrading the naturalness, expressiveness and scenic quality (including visual coherence) of this part of the landscape. In my opinion this would detract from the values of the wider ONL that are set out in Section 1.1.3 of the appended landscape assessment, including the very high, shared and recognised associative values. Development visible from Glenorchy – Queenstown Road and/or the waters of Lake Wakatipu would also degrade the aesthetic qualities and perceived naturalness of the wider ONL.
- 5.12** Controlled activity development is enabled by the Tourism Zone within the area of Moderate-High Landscape Sensitivity shown on the notified planning maps, to a height of 8 metres and without any controls in relation to building size/scale or site coverage standards. Development of this nature would be potentially visible from both the Glenorchy – Queenstown Road and the Mount Nicholas – Beach Bay Road. Such development also has the potential to detract from the naturalness, scenic, memorability, remoteness and tranquility, and shared and recognised values of the wider ONL.
- 5.13** For these reasons, I do not consider the proposed Tourism Zone provisions will protect the landscape values of the ONL from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. The proposed

Tourism Zone will therefore be inconsistent with Strategic Objective 3.2.1.8 and Strategic Policies 3.2.5.xxx and 3.3.30.<sup>4</sup>

- 5.14** The proposed Tourism Zone provides for, potentially quite substantial developments within the WPWTO on Lake Wakatipu, including a pier, a marina and boat moorings. The area in which these activities could occur is substantially larger than what was notified under the Walter Peak RVZ.
- 5.15** Under the proposed Tourism Zone, activities within the WPWTO would have restricted discretionary status, with the proposed matters of discretion including effects on natural character, landscape values and amenity values. In my view, this area of Lake Wakatipu does not have the capacity to absorb large pier structures, a marina or anything more than a very low density of boat moorings, without degrading the natural character and landscape values of the lake ONL, and giving rise to adverse effects on the naturalness, scenic and heritage values of the adjacent northern Eyre Mountains ONL. Such development would be visually prominent from both land and water and could substantially alter the landscape character of Beach Bay.
- 5.16** With respect to the Crown-owned marginal strips that are sought to be included within the Tourism Zone, there is potential, in my view, for built development and earthworks within these areas to degrade the natural character of the lake margins. The preservation of the natural character of lakes and their margins and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, is a matter of national importance under Section 6(a) of the RMA. Although the proposed BRA over these marginal strips means that buildings would be a discretionary activity, I do not consider that the proposed policies for the zone are sufficiently strong to ensure protection of the ONL values within as well as surrounding the zone. Under the current Rural zoning of the marginal strips, discretionary activity buildings would be assessed against a comprehensive list of assessment matters for ONLs (refer Part 21.21 of Chapter 21). In my view, the Rural Zone provisions would better protect the natural character of the lake margin (as required by s6 RMA) and the landscape values of the ONL.

<sup>4</sup> In Interim Decision NZ EnvC 205 [2019].

- 5.17** The submitter has sought to include the DOC Beach Bay Recreation Reserve in the Tourism Zone. I described this reserve in Section 1.1.5 of the Walter Peak section of my June 2019 assessment (refer **Appendix 1**). In Section 1.1.6, I concluded that the flatter beach slope section of the reserve had the ability to absorb well-designed low density development that did not detract from the heritage values of the bay. This part of the recreation reserve was mapped as an area of lower landscape sensitivity (refer Figure 18 of my landscape assessment).
- 5.18** In my opinion, the Tourism Zone provisions will not ensure an appropriate landscape outcome in this flatter beach slope area. Buildings up to 8 metres are enabled, with no limits on building size or density. In my view, development could detract from the landscape setting and heritage values of historic buildings in the bay, and the natural and scenic attributes of the landscape. I support the proposed BRA over the steeper slopes in the south-eastern part of the Recreation Reserve, as these have little capacity to absorb development. Visitor accommodation activities on these slopes could degrade the integrity and legibility of the mountain slopes, as well as the visual amenity of the bay and wider landscape.
- 5.19** In conclusion, from a landscape perspective, I oppose the relief sought by Wayfare in relation to the Tourism Zone, and extension of the Tourism Zone to include the marginal strips and the Beach Bay Recreation Reserve. While I oppose a rezoning of the lower part of the reserve to Tourism Zone, I do not oppose extension of the notified RVZ to the lower part of the reserve that is mapped as an area of lower landscape sensitivity in my June 2019 report.

**5.20** In my view, the notified RVZ for Walter Peak (with the amendments to zone provisions recommended by the IHP in their draft report 20.7) should be retained, as it is the most appropriate way to achieve the landscape-related objectives and policies of the PDP.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Mellsop".

**Helen Mellsop**

**4 March 2021**

## **APPENDIX 1**

**Rural Visitor Zone review landscape assessment, Walter Peak section, June 2019**



# QLDC Rural Visitor Zone Review

## Landscape assessment



June 2019

*Prepared for*  
Queenstown Lakes District Council

# 1 Landscape Assessment

## 1.1 Walter Peak RV Zone

The Walter Peak RV Zone is located on the southern side of the middle arm of Lake Wakatipu opposite Bobs Cove (refer **Figure 6** below) and is about 156 hectares in area. It has been zoned for visitor accommodation activities at least since the early 1980s. The zone is accessed by boat (regular visits by the Earnslaw) and from the Te Anau Mossburn Highway (SH94) via the Von and Mount Nicholas gravel roads.



**Figure 6:** Location of Cecil Peak and Walter Peak RV Zones.

### 1.1.1 Area of landscape

The Walter Peak RV Zone is located within the landscape of the northern Eyre Mountains, an extensive mountainous area bounded by Lake Wakatipu to the north and east. The incised valleys now occupied by McKinnons Creek, Collins Creek and the Lochy River divide the main peaks – Walter Peak, Cecil Peak and Bayonet Peaks. The land is largely Crown pastoral lease, with areas of freehold land in the Collins and Lochy valleys and at Water Peak.

### 1.1.2 Landscape description

| Biophysical attributes  |
|---|
| The landscape is almost completely steep and rugged mountainous terrain, ice-scoured where successive Wakatipu glaciations passed across the lake faces of the mountains and where tongues of |

glacier pushed up the Von, Collins Creek and Lochy valleys<sup>1</sup>. Remnant moraine deposits are present in these areas. Elevated lake beaches are a feature at bays around the lake and west of Walter Peak, evidence of higher water levels when the lake outlet was at Kingston (refer **Figure 13** in **Appendix B**). The upper parts of the mountains are characterised by rocky outcrops, bluffs and scree slopes.

Vegetation is predominantly tussock, with some areas of beech forest in gullies and regenerating bracken and mixed shrubland closer to the lake. Some of these areas are identified as SNAs in the PDP. Exotic shelter trees, eucalypts and improved grasslands are found on the alluvial beaches, lake edges and valleys. Natural elements, patterns and processes are dominant within the landscape, with ongoing processes of erosion and deposition and indigenous regeneration. Periodic burning for pasture improvement has modified the processes of regeneration and the small areas of valley and terrace lands have improved pasture and cropping. Predominant land uses are merino sheep and cattle grazing on the lower mountain slopes and flats, and farm tourism.

Human settlement is very limited and sparse, with homestead/farm building clusters at Halfway Bay, Collins Bay (Cecil Peak Station) and Mount Nicholas and tourist facilities and associated farm buildings at Water Peak. A lodge is also present on the lake shore west of Walter Peak but an associated consented rural subdivision is yet to be developed. The 1902 original homestead and outbuildings at Walter Peak Farm have heritage significance but are not scheduled in the PDP.

#### Sensory/perceptual attributes

The landscape has very high scenic qualities, as a result of the dramatic form, scale and extent of the mountains, and their juxtaposition with the waters of Lake Wakatipu. Cecil Peak, Walter Peak and Bayonet Peaks in particular are visually dominant when viewed from Queenstown and the lack of obvious development on the mountains means that they contribute strongly to locals' and visitors' perceptions of the quality of the natural environment. The mountains are highly expressive and legible, as their formative processes are visible in the glacial striations on the open mountain slopes. The even glaciated lower slopes rising from the lake and the characteristic 'mesa-like' peaks make the mountains highly memorable and distinctive.

Despite the historic clearance of beech forest from the slopes and the ongoing management of vegetation for extensive pastoral farming, the landscape is perceived as highly natural. Transient attributes are particularly strong, with changing snow levels and vegetation colours, along with dramatic daily changes in the play of light and shadow on the hummocky and fissured mountain slopes.

With the exception of Walter Peak Farm and farm tourism activities, the landscape is not generally publicly accessible and the lack of easy vehicle access means it has a very strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness.

#### Associative attributes

There is no specific information available about the values of the landscape to Ngāi Tahu, but it is likely that the bays and valleys were used as camping sites for Maori travelling further up the lake or to the Mavora area.

European historic associations include early pastoral farming on the high country stations. Cecil and Walter Peaks were named after the elder sons of William Rees, the first pastoral runholder in the Wakatipu.

Along with The Remarkables and the lake, the northern Eyre Mountains are a core component of the sense of place and identity of Wakatipu. Their proximity to Queenstown and prominence in views

<sup>1</sup> Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review. Walter Peak Conservation resources report. July 2005.

from the town enhances their role in the appreciation of and attachment of residents and visitors to the landscape. Views of the mountains are frequently used in tourism promotions.

### 1.1.3 *Landscape values*

Based on an evaluation of the landscape attributes, and available information about community and visitor perceptions, the values attached to the receiving landscape include:

- **High biophysical values**, as a result of the unmodified and distinctive geomorphology of the landscape and the dominance of indigenous tussocklands and shrubland.
- **High naturalness values**, as a result of the dominance of natural elements, patterns and processes within the landscape, the very low level of built modification, the adjoining lake, and people's perceptions (in the context of the District) of a highly natural environment.
- **Very high scenic values**, as a result of the awesome and rugged scale, form and extent of the mountains, the contrast between the snow-topped peaks, tawny tussocklands and blue lake waters, the reflections in the lake waters, the patterns of light and shadow on the mountain slopes, and the high level of visibility from the population and tourist centres of Queenstown. The scenic values are evidenced by the use of photographs of the landscape in tourism promotions for Queenstown and its popularity as a farm tourism destination.
- **Very high memorability values**, largely as a result of the scenic quality of the landscape and the strong impression this makes in people's minds.
- **Very high expressiveness values**, as a result of the open character of the landscape and the way the exposed topography demonstrates the formative processes of the mountains and lake.
- **Low experiential values**, as a consequence of the limited opportunities for people to access and move through the landscape, except on guided farm tours, heli-tours or on the Mount Nicholas – Beach Bay Road.
- **Very high remoteness and tranquillity values**, resulting from the general lack of road access and, in most places, the low level of human activity and modification.
- **High transient values**, as a consequence of changing snow levels and vegetation colours and the play of light on the open topography.
- **Moderate heritage values**, associated with the evidence of early high country pastoral farming.
- **Very high shared and recognised values**, as a very important part of sense of place and identity for the Wakatipu and as part of the marketing of Queenstown as a national and international tourist destination.

### 1.1.4 *Landscape category*

The landscape area containing the Cecil Peak and Walter Peak RV zones has a high level of naturalness and has values that mean it is exceptional and outstanding at both a district and

national level. It is appropriately categorised as an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) in the PDP.

#### *1.1.5 RV zone attributes and character*

The zone is located at the base of Walter Peak. It takes in Von Hill - a rôche moutonée that has been overridden by the Wakatipu glaciers, Beach Bay – the site of the Walter Peak ‘Colonel’s House’, and lake beach and alluvial flats (refer **Figures 16 and 17 in Appendix B**). The south-eastern part of the zone extends up the toe slopes of Walter Peak. The only water course is a small stream that flows from the Walter Peak slopes to the eastern side of Beach Bay.

Beach Bay and the valley to the west contain a cluster of visitor facilities and associated infrastructure, including the wharf, Colonel’s homestead restaurant, Ardmore House, woolshed with café/shop, farm demonstration building, cycle and horse-trekking buildings, staff accommodation, and storage and generator buildings. Picnic areas have been developed on the foreshore and at Beach Point and there is a network of tracks for walking, cycling and horse riding around the Von Hill rôche moutonée. A gravel carpark has been developed in the valley behind the bay and there is a grassed airstrip and helicopter landing pad further to the west.

Douglas fir on Beach Point and in the DOC recreation reserve on the eastern side of the bay have recently been removed, although mature trees remain at the bay behind the homestead. Revegetation with indigenous species has been undertaken in some of the cleared areas. Apart from exotic shelter belts along the roads and indigenous shrubland and eucalypts on the lakeside faces of the Von Hill headland, the majority of the land is covered in exotic grassland or crops. Fenced areas of the flats are used for sheep and horse grazing or cropping.

The zone currently has two character areas – the historic buildings and tourism development at Beach Bay and the valley to the west, and the remaining rural farmland or regenerating native vegetation on Von Hill headland and the western valley and flats.

In a submission to Stage 1 of the PDP Te Anau Developments Ltd (#607) sought rezoning of Beach Bay Recreation Reserve and the marginal strip from Beach Point to the bay from Rural Zone to Rural Visitor Zone. In their report on Stream 13, the Hearings Panel recommended that this rezoning be considered as part of the review of the Rural Visitor Zone. This land takes in the lake edge and beaches, gently sloping land within the bay to the east of the Colonel’s homestead and toe slopes of Walter Peak leading down to the lake edge. There is a large stand of mature Douglas fir on part of the Recreation Reserve, some of which appear to be failing (refer **Photograph 23 in Appendix B**). Terracing and track earthworks undertaken in the reserve have adversely affected the natural character and visual integrity of the bay.

#### *1.1.6 RV zone landscape sensitivity and landscape absorption capacity (refer **Figure 18 in Appendix B**)*

The ONL setting of the zones is very highly valued (refer 3.5.3 above) by the local community and by national and international tourists. The character and values of the landscape are

sensitive to changes that degrade perceived naturalness, scenic quality (including visual coherence), memorability, remoteness and tranquillity, and shared and recognised values. The heritage values associated with historic high country station buildings at Walter Peak are also vulnerable to landscape change that detracts from the integrity of their landscape setting.

Existing tourism development at Beach Bay is largely well established and forms an expected node of modification within the wider ONL. Recent newer development (including the farm demonstration building and utility buildings) has been designed to be visually recessive so that it does not detract from the red and cream-coloured former farmstead buildings. Built development is largely confined to the beach slope and the alluvial valley behind the beach and is enclosed by the Von Hill peninsula and the steep slopes of Walter Peak. While development is visible from the lake waters and, in some light conditions, from the Glenorchy-Queenstown Road, it is confined to a small area of the lake edge and is integrated by surrounding and background vegetation.

The bay area, including the flatter beach slope section of the recreation reserve, and the enclosed valley floor west of the bay have the ability to absorb well-designed development of a low density that does not detract from the heritage values of the bay and is not highly visible from the Mount Nicholas-Beach Bay Road.

The biophysical, natural and aesthetic qualities of the Von Hill headland and the lake edge slope and crest west of the headland are highly sensitive to built development or earthworks that modifies the natural landform or is visible from the Glenorchy – Queenstown Road. Such development could detract from the values of the wider ONL and the natural character of the margins of Lake Wakatipu. Development within the DOC marginal strip (which has been sought to be rezoned to RV) also has the potential to degrade the natural character of the lake margins.

The toe slopes of Walter Peak, both within the existing RV Zone (refer **Photograph 24** in **Appendix B**) and within the Beach Bay Recreation Reserve, also have little capacity to absorb visitor facility or visitor accommodation activities. Development in these more elevated areas could degrade the integrity and legibility of the mountain slopes, as well as adversely affecting the visual amenity of the bay and the wider landscape.

Open flat land west of the headland (refer **Photograph 25** in **Appendix B**), currently the site of the airstrip, has a moderately low ability to absorb visitor facility development. While this area of land is not visible from the lake itself, parts of it are seen from the Glenorchy-Queenstown Road (particularly at Twelve Mile Bluff and Rat Point) and it is completely open to the Mount Nicholas-Beach Bay Road. The flat land does not have any topographical features that would absorb development and existing vegetation is limited to a short section of exotic shelterbelt along the road.

#### *1.1.7 Recommendations*

The Walter Peak RV zone area has capacity to absorb appropriately designed visitor facility development clustered with the existing tourist facilities at Beach Bay and in the enclosed

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valley flats to the west. Such development would not substantially alter or compromise the character and values of the wider landscape.

I note that parts of the Colonel's restaurant extend outside the RV Zone into a small lot that is privately owned. I recommend that this small lot be included in the RV Zone.

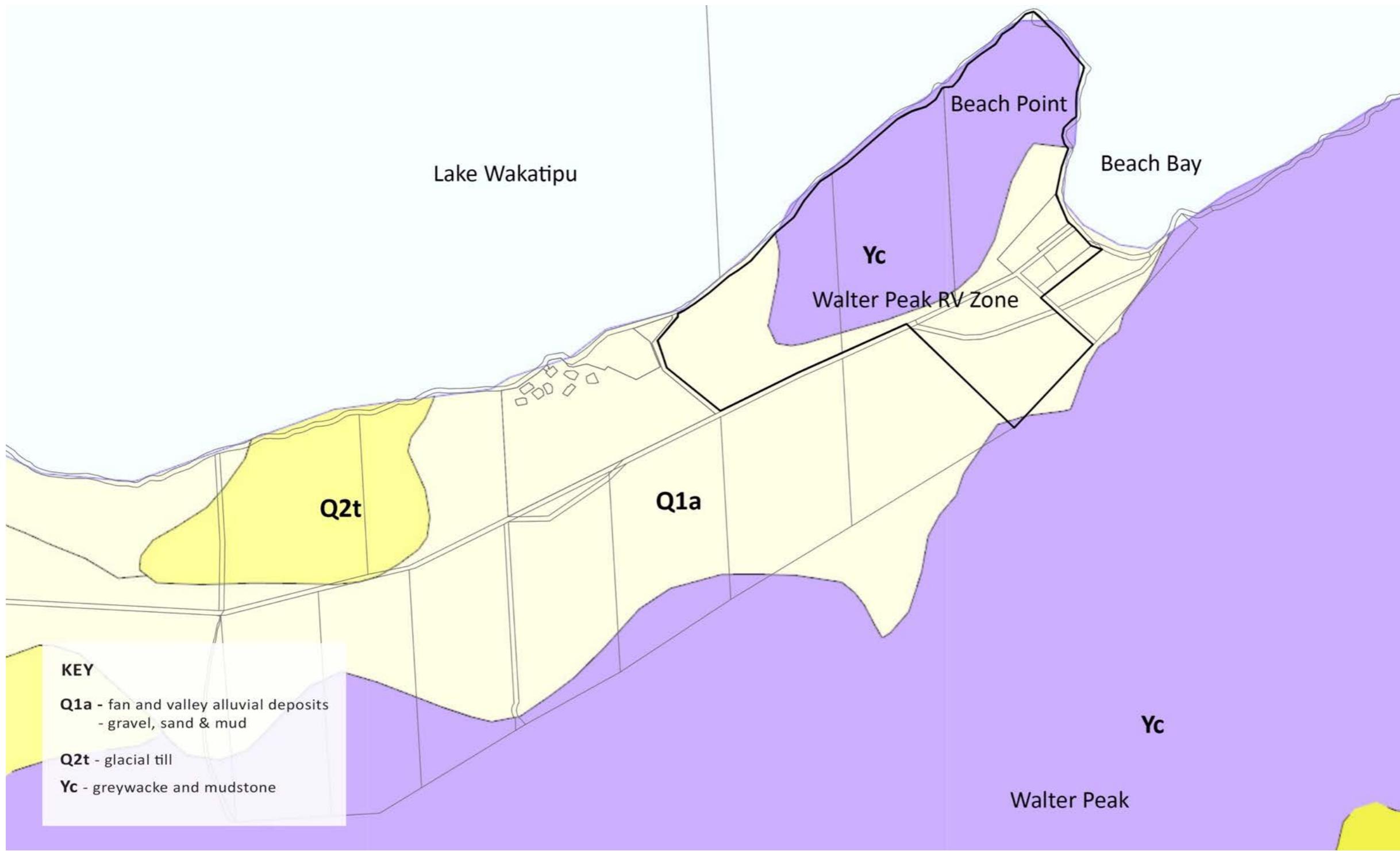
In order to be successfully absorbed I consider that visitor facility development would need to be subject to the following controls:

- Maximum building height of 6m;
- Limits on building coverage to ensure a low overall density of development;
- Protection of the landscape setting and heritage values of the Colonel's restaurant, Ardmore House and the woolshed;
- Except where buildings are designed to be coherent with the style, form and external materials of existing historic buildings, use of recessive external building materials similar to those required for buildings in the PDP Rural Zone;
- Retention or replacement of existing mature trees at the rear of Beach Bay;
- Appropriate landscaping that is either indigenous or consistent with existing vegetation in the locality and effectively integrates development (including earthworks);
- Location, design and landscaping of buildings to ensure development is not visually prominent from Mount Nicholas – Beach Bay Road.

## Appendix B

Maps and photographs

## Walter Peak RV Zone – maps and photographs



**Figure 16:** Geology in the vicinity of the Walter Peak RV Zone (source QLDC GIS & GNS 1: 250.000 Wakatipu Geological Map)

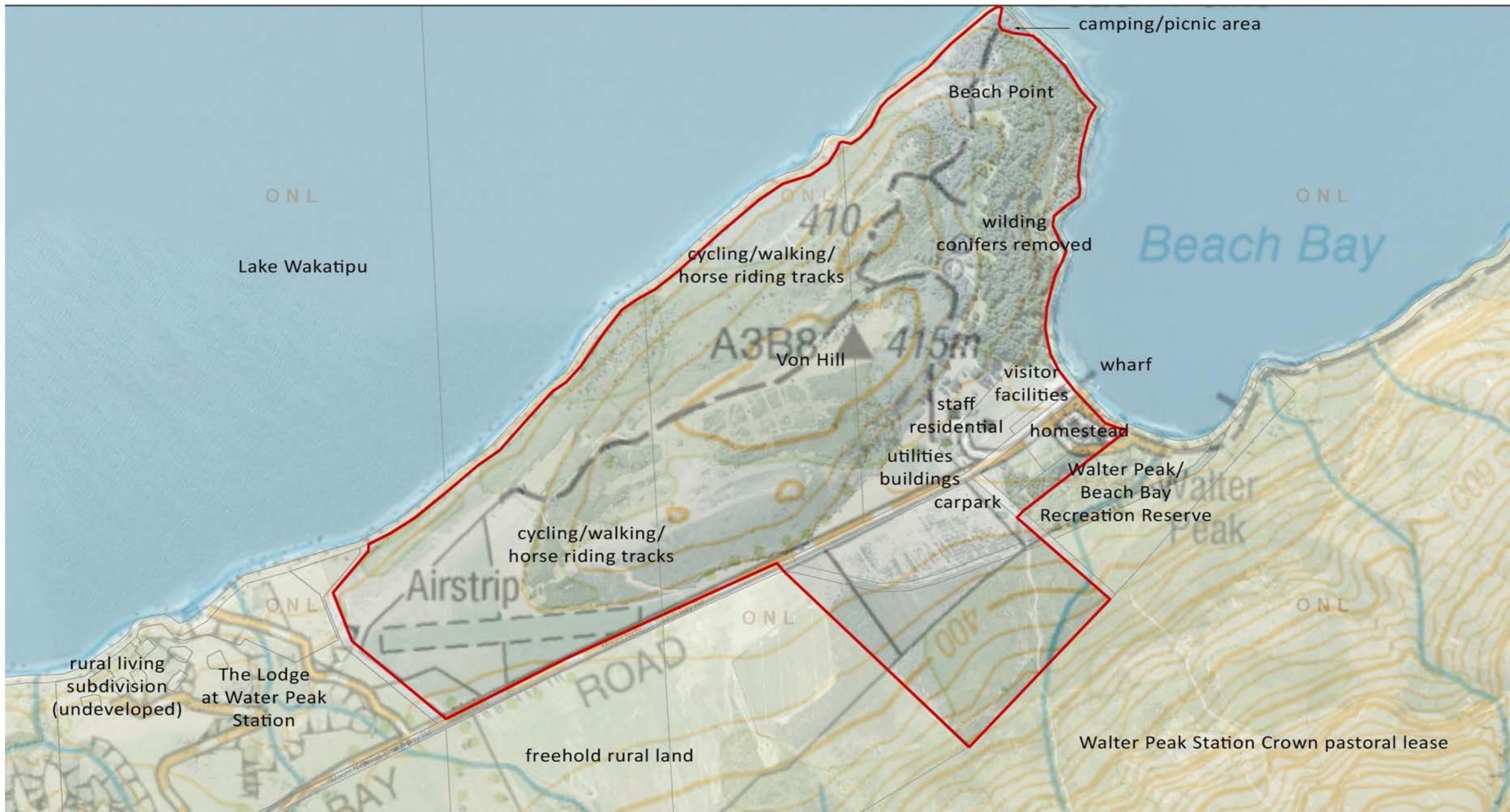


Figure 17: Existing features and immediate context



**Photograph 22:** View from lake to Beach Bay and Beach Point (panorama stitched from 3 photographs taken at 50mm lens equivalent at 11.35am on 20-02-19)



**Photograph 23:** View from lake to Beach Bay (photograph taken at 50mm lens equivalent at 11.35am on 20-02-19)



**Photograph 24:** Southern section of RV Zone extending up toe slopes of Walter Peak (photograph taken at 50mm lens equivalent at 12.10pm on 20-02-19)



**Photograph 25:** View from Mount Nicholas – Beach Bay Road over western area of RV Zone, including airstrip (panorama stitched from 3 photographs taken at 50mm lens equivalent at 12.20pm on 20-02-19)



**Photograph 26:** View east along Mount Nicholas-Beach Bay Road (photograph taken at 50mm lens equivalent at 112.25pm on 20-02-19)



**Photograph 27:** View to Walter Peak and RV Zone from northern lake shore (photograph taken at 105mm lens equivalent at 8.40am on 21-02-19)



**Figure 18:** Walter Peak RV Zone landscape sensitivity.