

Before Queenstown Lakes District Council

In the matter of The Resource Management Act 1991

And The Queenstown Lakes District proposed District Plan –
Rezoning Hearing Topic 12 – Upper Clutha mapping

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF BRETT THOMSON FOR

Glendhu Bay Trustees Limited (#583)

Dated 4 April 2017

Solicitors:

Maree Baker-Galloway | Rosie Hill
Anderson Lloyd
Level 2, 13 Camp Street, Queenstown 9300
PO Box 201, Queenstown 9348
DX Box ZP95010 Queenstown
p + 64 3 450 0700 | f + 64 3 450 0799
maree.baker-galloway@al.nz | rosie.hill@al.nz

**anderson
lloyd.**

Qualifications and Experience

- 1 My full name is Richard Brett Thomson.
- 2 I am Design Manager and Director of RBT Design Ltd, specialising in master planning, golf course design and landscape architecture.
- 3 I hold Bachelor Degrees in both Science and Landscape Architecture, and I am a member of the Urban Land Institute. I have attended the Harvard Graduate School of Design in Cambridge, USA studying Golf/ Residential Site Planning in 2002. I am also a Provisional Member of the Australian Society of Golf Course Architects.
- 4 I have worked in the master planning, golf course design and landscape architectural fields for 22 years. I have previously worked as a Landscape Architect for Boffa Miskell in Queenstown from 1995-1999, thereafter as Design Manager for Darby Partners from 1999- 2009, also based in Queenstown. Since 2009 I have run my own consultancy specializing in master planning and golf course architecture.
- 5 During my 22 years I have been directly involved in 4 of the 13 marque golf courses in New Zealand, these constitute the 'must plays' golf courses for visiting golfers. My last golf course commission has been chosen as the venue for a prestigious LPGA Tour event, to be played in September this year at Windross Farm in Auckland. This is expected to lead to a significant interest in New Zealand golf tourism.
- 6 During my time at Darby Partners I was Design Manager and worked closely with John Darby on all facets of master planning, golf course design and landscape architecture on projects such as Clearwater Resort, Jack's Point, Michael Hills and Parkins Bay. I worked on Parkins Bay for 10 years.
- 7 My Design Management role at Parkins Bay was varied, from producing key design documents such as Cattle Flat Resource Study, thru to undertaking the master planning and golf course design, re-vegetation planting strategy and open space planning.
- 8 I have recently been re-engaged by Darby Partners to consult on the master planning and golf course design at Parkins Bay.
- 9 In preparing this evidence I have reviewed:
 - (a) The reports and statements of evidence of other experts giving evidence relevant to my area of expertise, including:

- (i) Mr John Gerard Darby
 - (b) The proposed Glendhu Station Zone as being amended by Chris Ferguson (work in progress).
- 10 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. This evidence has been prepared in accordance with it and I agree to comply with it. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

Scope of Evidence

- 11 I have been asked by Glendhu Bay Trustees Limited to prepare evidence in relation to both master planning and golf course design as they relate both to my previous role as Design Manager for Parkins Bay from 2003-2009 and my recent re-engagement on the golf course design and master planning.
- 12 My evidence addresses the following matters:
- (a) A brief overview of the project and its history.
 - (b) Comment on the proposed new zoning of the golf, residential and lakeshore activity areas.
 - (c) The amended extent of the activity areas in relation to the master planning of the development.
- 13 My evidence is primarily focused on examining the design and master planning outcomes for the land owned by Glendhu Bay Trustees Ltd and which builds on my previous experience. Although I am aware of and support the overall direction of the overall structure plan across the wider Glendhu Station land, the design outcomes for each of these areas will be guided primarily by the zone provisions.

Executive Summary

- 14 Firstly, I have provided a project synopsis which gives an important backdrop to the District Plan Review and with that I have also provided a time line of the project to highlight this has been a work-in-progress for some time. The intention with my evidence is to convey the need to cement the approved resource consent for Glendhu Bay in the District Plan, thus enabling a comprehensive and integrated suite of development and conservation initiatives.
- 15 I then proceed to discuss components of the Glendhu Station Structure plan, namely the golf (GB-G), residential (GB-R) and lakeshore (GB-LS) activities areas.

Glendhu Bay Background – Project Synopsis

- 16 In order to discuss the master planning for what was previously known as Parkins Bay (now Glendhu Bay), it is important to quickly look at the consented project, which was approved by the Environment Court. There is a long history to this project which is useful to all parties when considering the District Plan Review.
- 17 The project consists of:
- (a) Public access to both the lake and high country providing missing links in the public trail network in the wider Wanaka area;
 - (b) An 18 hole golf course and associated facilities e.g. practice facilities;
 - (c) Clubhouse and jetty;
 - (d) 12 x Visitor accommodation units with 24 bedrooms;
 - (e) 42 x Homesites; and
 - (f) Ecological enhancement and revegetation.
- 18 The masterplan for the Glendhu Bay development from the Environment Court decision is attached in **Appendix 1**.

Parkins Bay Background – Project Timeline

- 19 Alongside the project components it is helpful to look at the project timeline that got us to get to where we are today to understand this has been a long time in the planning:
- (a) August 2007: QLDC hearing held on Parkins Bay Preserve Project;
 - (b) 2008: QLDC approve the project, but remove 8 of the 50 homesites, leaving a total of 42;
 - (c) 2008: UCEC appeal the decision;
 - (d) February / March 2009: Environment Court Hearing;
 - (e) December 2010: Interim Environment Court decision; and
 - (f) May 2012: Final Environment Court decision;
 - (g) November 2012: Bulk Title Subdivision and establishment of covenant restrictions through consent notices;

- (h) January 2015: Changes to conditions of land use consent to enable greater flexibility in the timing of implementation and revegetation;
- (i) August 2015: Notification of District Plan Review (Stage1) and preparation of submission by Glendhu Bay Trustees Ltd requesting insertion of Glendhu Station Zone through submission (23 October 2015);
- (j) 2016: Project commences with Stage 1 earthworks and revegetation, including approval of Revegetation strategy and first stage earthworks;
- (k) June 2017: Hearing on District Plan Review.

Parkins Bay Master Planning – Structure Plan

- 20 The proposed Structure Plan for Glendhu Station Zone (refer **Appendix 2**) was originally attached to the submission on the District Plan review by Glendhu Bay Trustees Ltd. It brings together the various components of the Environment Court decision into their logical activity areas that along with the consent conditions as 'provisions' in the Proposed District Plan ensures practical, design and economic sense in implementing the consent and securing the biodiversity, recreational and ecological benefits derived from the consent across the Glendhu Station land in a holistic way. This is the reverse of what normally happens in Structure Planning, where the detailed master planning follows the broad brush Structure Plan process. In this case the detail was produced up front, allowing all potential outcomes and effects to be tested and secured.
- 21 It is my understanding that the Glendhu Station Zone seeks to provide for long term diversified and sustainable land use planning of the rural area, delivering with it, recreational, ecological, landscape, development and tourism outcomes. This level of landscape management planning came as a result of the Resource Study, incorporating both Glendhu Bay and Cattle Flat Stations¹. I understand the study was initiated by the landowners of the Glendhu and Cattle Flat Stations in association with Darby Partners Ltd and was formulated in advance of the original Parkins Bay resource consent application. The Cattle Flat Resource Study remains as a key instrument guiding decisions relating to the future use of this land.
- 22 From a master planning perspective, it is now logical that a Structure Plan in the District Plan include the framework established by the resource consent and create well defined activity areas with their proposed controls as a complete package of development, recreation and biodiversity enhancement.

¹ Boffa Miskell Ltd "*Glendhu / Cattle Flat Resource Study*", June 2006

- 23 The current resource consent is very prescriptive and having a greater degree of flexibility enables better master planning solutions without losing, and in fact building on and gaining, the overall benefits provided by the consented development.

Changes to the Glendhu Station Zone Structure Plan

- 24 The structure plan attached to the submission from Glendhu Bay Trustees Ltd has continued to be refined in preparation for this hearing, including through additional testing of land use and management outcomes and further landscape advice from Ms Pfluger. A revised Structure Plan for the Glendhu Station Zone is contained within **Appendix 3**.
- 25 The key elements on the structure plan that have been modified since the original submission include:
- (a) Removal of the Lodge Activity Area;
 - (b) Removal of a portion of the Residential Activity Area located on the northern side of the Wanaka – Mount Aspiring Road;
 - (c) Amalgamation of the remainder of the Residential Activity Area located on the southern side of the road with subsequent removal of the Open Space Farm from within the residential area;
 - (d) The addition of a Home sites overlay within the Residential Activity Area to specify the exact locations for each of the 50 residences;
 - (e) Golf Activity Area – Extended over Fern Burn to allow the course to be re-routed into Fern Burn Area;
 - (f) The addition of a Golf Maintenance Overlay within the Golf Activity Area to define the location of maintenance activity together with related rules;
 - (g) A change to the shape of the Lakeshore Activity Area so that it is not located above terrace landform and aligned along lake front;
 - (h) The boundary of the GS-C activity area has been amended to better correspond with the natural landform and mirror the alignment of the Fern Burn stream;
 - (i) A small adjustment of the GB-G activity boundary to correspond with the existing cadastral site boundary along the edge of the Fern Burn; and

- (j) A revision of the Moraine Slope Landscape Protection Overlay to better reflect the actual moraine slope location and extent following a site assessment and a review of survey information.
- 26 An overlay plan illustrating the differences between the structure plan contained within the submission and the revised structure plan detailed above is contained in **Appendix 4**.

Parkins Bay Master Planning – Golf Course

- 27 Golf tourism is one of the emerging market sectors in New Zealand providing a high value experience to high yielding visitors. The market has rapidly expanded from a golf visitor spend of \$137m in 2013 to \$337m in 2016². This market is most active in the Southern Lakes where we have the highest concentration of ‘marque’ courses, three of the thirteen courses, as well as the supporting infrastructure and other tourism activities. The marque courses are marketed collectively as ‘must plays’ for the travelling golfer.
- 28 This market seeks out the best golf experiences in New Zealand and logically the golf courses need to reflect that and be set in New Zealand’s best landscapes making it a unique experience. The ability to ‘play and stay’ is another feature of these golf courses, where a lodge or villa accommodation is part of the offering e.g. Kauri Cliffs, Tara Iti and Cape Kidnappers. Parkins Bay was planned along those lines as it exhibits all the site features required to attract that market and will without question be granted ‘marque’ status upon completion.
- 29 My understanding is that the proposed Glendhu Station Zone and provisions, as they relate to the golf course, seeks to replicate the Environment Court decision conditions into the District Plan framework whilst allowing for both flexibility in the implementation of the golf course as well as to include an additional 8-9ha of land into the golf zone (GB- G) for alternative layout of the golf holes. Glendhu Bay Trustees Ltd have already had to go back to the QLDC in July 2015 to amend a condition of consent under S127 of the RMA to enable realignment of some of the golf holes, a reasonably minor change. It is now proposed such adjustments can be made within the bounds of the activity area and the rules for that area, as the golf course would be a permitted activity in its own activity area, being GB-G. That appears to be a very logical and rational approach given that the majority of the the golf course and its effects have been assessed already and approved accordingly. With respect to the proposed development of a new area of golf course across the Fern Burn, I consider this will be a beneficial change to the overall playing experience. When looking at golf course sites, I look for variety where I can create small sequences of holes, between 2 and 4, which have

² Golf Tourism New Zealand (personal communication)

similar characteristics, whether that is topography, views or planting that is site specific. The ability to put 3 golf holes in the 'river landscape' adds greatly to the quality of the golf experience we are trying to create and the particular topography, being old river terraces is natural golf country requiring minimal earthworks or shaping, except for key features like greens, tees and bunkers.

- 30 In my 22 years involved in master planning and golf course design, a degree of flexibility and adaptability allow for better decision making and better outcomes. I concur with Mr Darby's on the importance of flexibility in implementing the proposal. Every golf course project I have been involved with has always required adjustments and change, which is simply part of the design process.

Parkins Bay Master Planning – Residential Area

- 31 The original master planning for the 50 homesites was the most rigorous undertaking in site planning, design and mitigation I have ever been involved with, due to the sensitivity of the broader landscape that we were working within. The design, heights, building platform levels and proposed mitigation of all buildings were tested from numerous public vantage points to ensure that the dwellings were 'not readily visible' from public viewing points.
- 32 Forty-two homesites were approved by the Environment Court. However, the Judge in his decision did allow the opportunity to review whether there was any potential for more. The Judge stated in paragraph [152] *In Mr Kruger's view "... this development significantly overstepped the mark in respect to creating a threshold". We do not consider that is the case in respect of the golf course. In respect of the 42 houses the proposal comes close to exceeding a threshold, but may not if an appropriate set of conditions and covenants is imposed.*
- 33 It is my opinion that the original 50 homesites met the very stringent test under the provisions of the rural zone of the Operative District Plan of being 'not readily visible' from the Wanaka – Mount Aspiring Road. The location of the proposed homesites is based on the original master plan and further input and advice from Ms Pfluger to ensure an optimal landscape outcome is achieved. The location of the approved residences from the Court approved plans relative to the homesite overlay and Residential Activity Area generally is shown on the plan contained within **Appendix 5**.
- 34 Part of the vision for Parkins Bay was the significant revegetation of the site with endemic Kanuka. This revegetation was also put forward as mitigation and integration of the homesites into the landscape. In order to be comfortable with the growth rates of the Kanuka Darby Partners, with the help of Homecreek Nurseries, established two test plots so we could monitor the annual growth rates and be confident at the Council hearing at the time, that these growth rates for Kanuka were achievable. The test areas were planted around 2005. I returned to

the site in late March of this year, having not been on the site since 2009 to find the Kanuka over 4m tall, reinforcing our study that the growth rates of 250-300mm a year were achievable and that the mitigation measures were appropriate and effective.

- 35 This reaffirmed my opinion that the total of 50 homesites could be absorbed into this landscape with good architectural design and mitigation through the reinstatement of endemic plant species, as per my evidence at the original QLDC hearing in 2007.
- 36 The proposed zone includes eight carefully positioned homesites, to be located in areas within the landscape that can absorb change and which have been further refined following recent site review and assessment since the Environment Court decision. Ms Pfluger will address these eight homesites in greater detail in her landscape architectural evidence.
- 37 Creating the Residential Activity Area (GB-R) is a logical progression for the approved development given that all the detail and controls will be transferred from the Environmental Court decision into the Zone provisions on an even more integrated basis with opportunity for greater biodiversity, recreational, conservation and ecological benefits.

Parkins Bay Master Planning – Lake Shore Area

- 38 The Proposed Lakeshore Activity Area (GB-LS) encompasses a variety of activities. It is an area in the original master plan that focused on the provision of public access e.g. trails, the provision of public facilities i.e. the jetty and parking, provision of public amenity e.g. the café/bar/ restaurant/ restrooms, as well as the provision of visitor accommodation. The overlay plan contained within **Appendix 5** illustrates the differences between the development approved by the Environment Court and the revised Structure Plan.
- 39 I note from this plan that the approved jetty is located within the bed of Lake Wanaka and thus outside of the Zone and that the area of the Lakeshore Activity Area will enable some limited opportunity for activity to extend to the east. This eastward extension is proposed as a direct result of watching the district expand and grow beyond all projections and the need to ensure that desirable locations, like Parkins Bay, are planned with the future in mind. The redistribution of the built form over a wider area allows for potentially greater public open space in the area directly behind the beach and jetty. This is one potential exercise that will be undertaken to see if such a re-design is beneficial. The creation of the Lake Shore Activity Area enables such a review to take place.
- 40 Significant site planning went into ensuring that all these elements could be accommodated in a reasonably tight and constrained area near the lake.

- 41 The district is experiencing unprecedented growth in both the domestic economy and international tourism. It is timely then that we are having the District Plan Review hearings. To me the purpose of the District Plan Review is to plan for the future of our district with visionary thinking and decision making to ensure our communities grow in a sustainable and managed way, within certain defined parameters and with certain expected and anticipated outcomes.
- 42 With the DPR also comes the need to review all project master planning to ensure that it is, as far as possible, also future proofed and Glendhu Bay is no exception.
- 43 Public access to the lakeshore was a founding principle for the McRaes in enabling this project to proceed. Now with the increasing local population and tourism growth the feeling is our current layout along the waterfront could be further optimised to provide for additional public amenity through flexibility in building location and the spatial arrangement of associated golf course/visitor accommodation use. I have seen the Glendhu Bay campground buckle under its own popularity in summer and I can see Glendhu Bay and surrounding area, given its scenic beauty, quality boating, proposed amenities and soon to be highly accessible, suffering the same fate. There are currently no other lake edge destinations around Lake Wanaka with a jetty and the level of amenity provided for here. In my opinion it is in the best interest of the district that such an area is future proofed as it is unlikely to be replicated.
- 44 Creating a Lakeshore Activity Area within the proposed Glendhu Station zone will enable careful planning of this area. The idea has been discussed that simply repositioning the buildings to 'free up' the lake edge for more public area and public parking would go a long way to future proof this area. I understand from a review of the proposed Glendhu Station Zone rules that building within the Lakeshore Activity Area is a controlled activity, subject to *inter alia* a consideration of the external appearance of buildings, including colour, reflectance values and materials, with respect to the effect on visual and landscape values of the area.

Conclusion

- 45 There is a clear logic to creating the Glendhu Station Zone, given all the outcomes and effects are known due to its comprehensively planned nature. Creating the zone gives a bit more flexibility as to how the proposal can be implemented, to ensure the delivery of much needed quality tourism infrastructure while reinforcing and expanding the biodiversity and recreational, ecological and conservation benefits of the development as consented by the Environment Court. The District Plan Review process, which takes a visionary approach to district wide matters, is the correct vehicle for achieving this.

- 46 The creation of the various activity areas, notably golf (GB-G), residential (GB-R) and lake shore (GB-LS) is simply the formalisation of the approved Environment Court consent conditions into the district plan provisions, a logical progression from resource consent to district plan on the originally consented site and wider land through a detailed structure plan and associated provisions.

Dated this 4th day of April 2017

Brett Thomson

APPENDIX 1 - Approved Parkins Bay Masterplan (from Environment Court)

APPENDIX 2 - Glendhu Station Zone Structure Plan (from original submission)

APPENDIX 3 - Revised Glendhu Station Zone Structure Plan

APPENDIX 4 - Overlay of original and revised Structure Plan

APPENDIX 5 - Overlay of revised Structure Plan on approved Parkins Bay Masterplan