

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

AND

IN THE MATTER of the submission by Mount Christina Limited on the QLDC Proposed District Plan 2015 (Stream 13) to realign the Rural Residential zone boundary

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF STEPHEN SKELTON FOR

Mount Christina Limited (Submitter #764)

12th June 2017



INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Stephen Russell Skelton. I have the qualifications of a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Northern Arizona University and a Masters of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University. I am the Director of Patch Limited (**Patch**), a landscape architecture and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and am the acting chairman of the Southern Branch.
2. I have been involved in landscape consultancy work in the Queenstown Lakes District area for over 4 years, working in both the public and private sector. I held the position of landscape planner with Lakes Environmental before it was absorbed by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**) in 2013. I then held the position of landscape architect at a private practice based in Queenstown before opening my own practice in June 2016. My work includes all facets of landscape architecture and landscape planning through the range of small and large scale projects. Over the last year, my work at Patch has included master planning, commercial and residential design, preparation of native restoration planting plans, preparation of landscape management plans, preparation of landscape assessments for resource consent applications and the preparation and presentation of evidence for Council and District Plan Review hearings.
3. I am professionally familiar with the values of the rural, rural living and urban landscapes in the Queenstown Lakes District. I understand the Strategic Direction of the Proposed District Plan and the Objectives and Policies, especially those contained with the Rural and Landscape chapters.
4. 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.

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5. I visited the site on June 1st 2017. I walked the site itself to all extents of the proposed zone boundaries. I then viewed the site from the public places within the vicinity of the site including the Lovers Leap Road, the Paradise – Glenorchy Road and the Earlslaw Burn Trailhead. I took photographs of the site and have used these photographs in assessing the relief sought in the submission.
6. This submission seeks to amend the boundaries of an existing Rural Residential zone (RRZ) near the Paradise- Glenorchy Road approximately 12km north of Glenorchy (**Attachment A**). The site is partly zoned Rural Residential and partly zoned Rural and is within an Outstanding Natural Landscape (**ONL**).



The site's cadastral boundaries hold parts of an alluvial river terrace and the foot of the feature known as Camp Hill. It is near the southern feature of the Mt Earnslaw massif known as Lovers Leap and exists on the flatter lands between Mt Alfred, the Rees River and the Richardson Mountains.

7. Part of the site is partially zoned rural residential; however, it is difficult to follow the logic which lead to the delineation of this zoning as the RRZ extends over the southern, highly visible face of the alluvial terrace. A band of mixed exotic conifers exists near this southern edge and another band of mixed exotic conifers extends across the 'centre' of the site on the terrace flats. It is understood that the existing RRZ is approximately 15ha in area and could theoretically yield 36 lots at the anticipated density of 4,000m² per unit. An existing approved consent, RM150569 provides for a 26-lot subdivision on parts of both the RRZ and Rural zoned lands between the upper edge of the terrace face and the foot of Camp Hill. It is understood that part of the decision to grant development on parts of the Rural zoned portions of the site was that the development would be sited within the more logical topographical area which was intended when the RRZ was established.
8. This submission seeks to realign the RRZ (**Attachment B**) so that it more closely follows the topographic features of the site and is better aligned with the zone boundaries originally proposed by Messers Kirkland and Hohneck.¹ As rural residential type development has already been approved on the site, the submitter volunteers specific zone rules to ensure the rezoning maintains the standards and effects of the approved development while strengthening the existing controls with regards to effects on visual amenity and landscape character. These specific zone rules proposed include:
 - a. A setback of 20m from the zone boundary. This rule will ensure the quality and character and visual amenity of the terrace and Camp Hill is maintained.
 - b. Limit the maximum number of dwellings within the RRZ to 36, which is the number of dwellings that the current zone area could theoretically yield and which reflects previously consented development. This rule will ensure the level of development does not exceed that which is anticipated by the existing zone.
 - c. Limit the maximum building height to 5.5m. This will reduce the visual effects of built development.

EVIDENCE OF DR MARION READ

9. Dr Marion Read has provided a brief assessment of the submission. Dr Read considers that the configuration of the existing zone is not coherent as it does not relate to land forms or features². She

¹ R Buxton, 24 May 2017, paragraph 11.8

² Evidence of Dr Read, May 24 2017, Page 85, Paragraph 15.5



considers that it would be desirable to locate development along the eastern boundary of the site where it could be backed by the landform of Camp Hill and that development on or close to the terrace escarpments should be avoided. Dr Read suggests that the zoning should be reconfigured so that it reduces the extent of adverse effects of future development on the character and quality of the landscape³.

10. Dr Read incorrectly states that existing consent for residential development on the site has lapsed.
11. Dr Read states that the proposed rezoning would allow for increased development from 36 lots to 48 lots and considers that there is no justification for increasing the area of the RRZ as the adverse effects on landscape character and quality would be exacerbated by additional residential use⁴.
12. I agree with Dr Read that the existing RRZ is not coherent and that development should be discouraged on or near the terrace face. I also agree that increased residential development of a density beyond what is presently anticipated within the RRZ may exacerbate the anticipated effects of development. I disagree with Dr Read that development should be concentrated near the foot of Camp Hill and consider that the flat area of land between the terrace face and the foot of Camp Hill has the capacity to absorb appropriate development in clusters while avoiding adverse effects on the quality and character of both the terrace face and Camp Hill.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED RURAL RESIDENTIAL ZONE

13. The submission seeks to amend the boundaries of the RRZ so that it more closely follows the topographic features of the site. As stated above, it is widely agreed that the existing zone is not logically delineated in relation to the landscape's topographic features or the land in question. I consider that the RRZ boundaries as sought by the submitter are carefully located near the upper edge of the terrace face at its western and southern extents and near the foot of Camp Hill at its eastern extents. The north boundary of the proposed RRZ extends across the terrace flats to the edge of development approved by RM150569. The northern extents of this zone are near the toe of Camp Hill which visually screens development from the Rees River landscape character area.
14. I consider that the rules that are proposed to accompany this zone change will positively direct future development such that it is sensitive to the landscape's values. The existing zone would allow development to occur on and below parts of the terrace face where they would be highly visible and could degrade the landscape's quality and character. The proposed rules which will accompany the new

³ Evidence of Dr Read, May 24 2017, Page 85, Paragraph 15.6

⁴ Evidence of Dr Read, May 24 2017, Page 85, Paragraph 15.6



RRZ will restrict development to the upper terrace flats and will set built development at least 20m from the upper edge of the terrace (the proposed zone boundary). This will ensure built development is not sited on or near the terrace face.

15. A 5.5m height limit is proposed. When combined with the zone boundary setback rule, this height control will ensure built development located in proximity to the terrace face is of an appropriate scale as to not appear dominant or to detract from the landscape's natural and rural values, especially as viewed from the Paradise – Glenorchy Road.
16. Lovers Leap, Mt Alfred and the Richardson Mountains contribute to a landscape which is vast and dramatic in its scale and highly natural in character. The floor of this landscape is more modified displaying a strong pastoral character. The floor of the landscape, being the area shown in **Attachment A**, displays characteristics which are more aligned with the Rural Landscape Classification (**RLC**). However, the landscape's close associations to the dramatic natural features of the Mt Earnslaw massif, Diamond Lake, Mt Alfred, the Rees River, to a lesser extent the Richardson Mountains and the somewhat enclosed nature of the valley floor by these features renders it outstanding and memorable. I consider the site is part of an ONL. The Camp Hill feature exists near the centre of this valley and east of the site. It is moderately sloped, relatively small in scale and mostly clad in pasture grass with patches and sweeps of indigenous scrubland. This feature acts an intermediary between the landscape's dominant and enclosing natural features and the pastoral character of the valley floor.
17. The proposal to realign the RRZ over a larger area will allow for sufficient flexibility in any future subdivision design such to maintain openness and view corridor concepts. The comprehensive assessment matters for subdivision contained within the RRZ zone also allow for consideration of open space and recreation. This will assist to ensure that an open view from the Paradise – Glenorchy Road, at the Earnslaw Burn bridge, to the foot of Camp Hill (consistent with that shown in **Attachment C**) can be provided for. A larger area allows for a more flexible subdivision design and can allow for visual amenity and better protect the quality and character of the landscape.
18. The submitter also volunteers a rule that would restrict the level of built development to the 36 dwellings which the existing RRZ could theoretically yield. Development consented under RM150569 spreads 26 lots to near the edges of the proposed zone boundary. I consider that rural residential development within the subject site, regardless of it being sited within the existing RRZ or the proposed RRZ will affect the existing landscape character, quality and visual amenity. The difference between the anticipated effect of the approved 26 lots which spread across the site, the theoretical yield of 36 lots on the existing zone and the 36 lots sought by the submitter in the proposed RRZ is insignificant. The potential increase in development will not exacerbate the existing anticipated effects of either the



existing zone or the existing subdivision consent. The landscape can absorb appropriate development. The relief sought will not lead to development which would cross a threshold with respect to the landscape's ability to absorb change.

19. Future development will be subject to a consenting process which would also be able to address further landscape matters such as visual mitigation, and positive effects. I consider that the zone extension will not exacerbate the anticipated effects of either the existing zone or approved consent.

CONCLUSION

20. The submission seeks to realign and extend a RRZ on an elevated terrace between the top of the terrace face and the base of Camp Hill. The submission seeks to align the zone to better reflect topographic features. The submitter volunteers to restrict the level of development so that it is consistent with that theoretically anticipated by the existing zoning, to impose a setback rule and restrict the height of future buildings.
21. I consider that the proposed RRZ closely follows the natural lay of the land. The volunteered setback rules will ensure the quality and character of terrace face and foot of Camp Hill is maintained. The submitter proposes to restrict residential development to 36 lots and this will ensure the level of development does not exceed that which is anticipated by the existing zone.
22. Overall I consider that the realignment of the zone boundary and associated rules will result a rural residential area which is sensitive to the landscape's values. I consider that the realignment of the RRZ will not exacerbate the anticipated effects of the existing RVZ and subdivision consent and for that reason I support the submission.

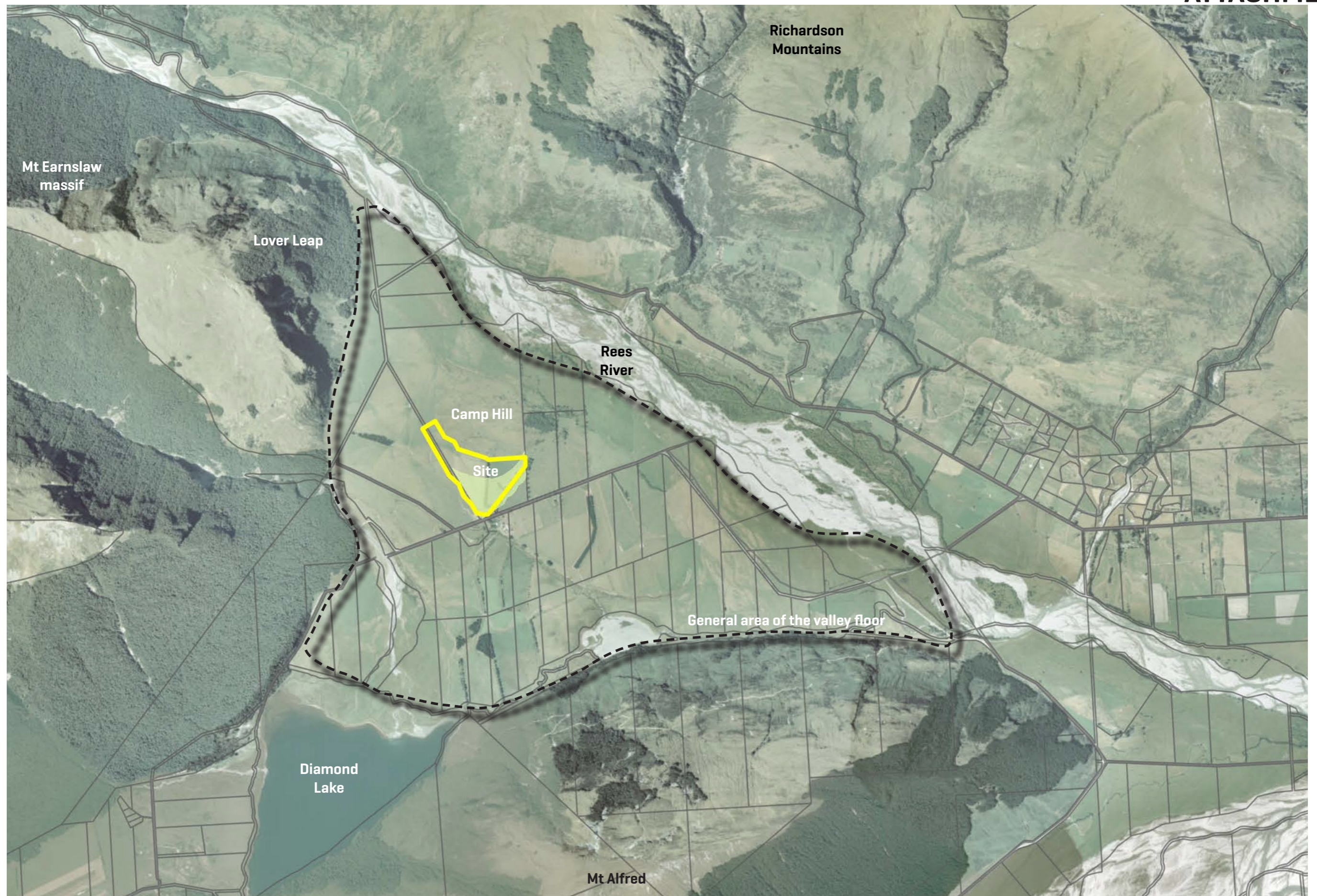
Stephen Skelton

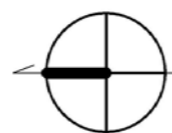
Landscape Architect

June 12, 2017



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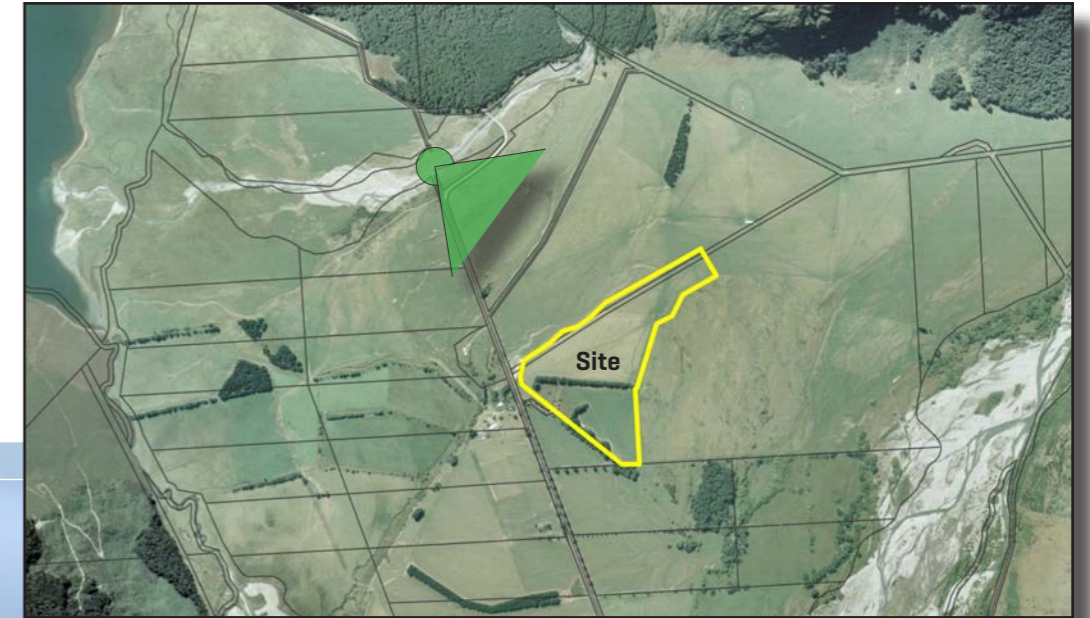


Image 1: A composite of 3 photographs taken with a 50mm lens on June 1 2017 at 4:30pm. Viewing Distance 500mm

----- Indicated 'Camp Hill View Corridor'