

LHIL AND OTHERS (2291, 2314, 2319, 1315, 2526, 2527, 2296, 2475, 2229, 2126, 2292, 2321, 2387, 2313, 2320, 2387, 2787)

EVIDENCE SUMMARY OF BEN ESPIE (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)

- 1 I consider that the "capability to absorb development" entry in the LCU13 part of Schedule 24.8 of the PDP should not be "low", as per the notified situation. Like some other LCUs (such as LCUs 4, 8, 23 and 25), LCU13 should be given two ratings in my opinion; "low" in relation to the more elevated slopes above Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road, and "high" in relation to the rest of the LCU (i.e. the area marked in green on my Appendix 1 of my evidence).
- 2 I consider that the area marked in green on my Appendix 1 can absorb rural living development with a minimum lot size of 4000m² without problematic adverse effects on the landscape character or visual amenity of the Wakatipu Basin. The rural living area that would result from this would be contained within logical boundaries, would read as appropriate infill development within an existing rural living area, would not spread into undeveloped areas and would not sully the character of the Wakatipu Basin as a whole.
- 3 I consider that my suggested green outline would represent a logical and robust precinct boundary. Mr Langman agrees with this in paragraph 20.13 of his rebuttal evidence. While the upper precinct edge above Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road would not follow a clearly legible landform edge, the pattern of existing development (along with in-fill as provided for by my suggested precinct edge) would create *"a legible and strong edge to the rural living area. That area would be of a distinct and different rural character and amenity to the broader rural land"*. In my opinion, this would prevent the possibility of inappropriate uphill *"development creep"*, as referred to by Ms Gilbert², much more than the existing or notified situations.
- 4 I consider that some of the existing development within LCU13 currently appears somewhat unsympathetic; in particular the upper parts of the Morven Hill zoned area (where considerable building has happened within the last 3 or 4 years). This is not to say that future development as enabled by my suggested situation would be similarly unsympathetic, it would not. The upper line of dwellings within the ODP RRZ on Morven Hill has already been built; it is part of the receiving environment. The development enabled by my suggested situation will visually read as infill, lower down the slopes, located amongst existing development.
- 5 I agree that it is not realistic to expect mitigatory vegetation to entirely screen development as these areas of zoning mature. Views out from the sites will always be sought to be maintained. However, vegetation within these existing areas of development (particularly on Morven Hill) is currently particularly immature and I do not see that complete (or even substantial) screening of all built form is necessarily required.
- 6 Overall, I consider that Ms Gilbert's description of the area inside the ODP RRZ as being "highly sensitive" is an exaggeration. Given that the PDP must appropriately manage this district for a decade after it becomes operative, I consider that enabling rural living "infill" development as I suggest is logical and appropriate in terms of landscape outcomes.

¹ Rebuttal evidence of Mr Langman, paragraph 20.13.

² Rebuttal evidence of Ms Gilbert, paragraph 14.9.