

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN-LAKES DISTRICT COUCIL

IN THE MATTER of a hearing on submissions to the Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan pursuant to clause 8B of the First Schedule to the Resource Management Act 1991

ON BEHALF OF **GLEN DENE LIMITED**
GLEN DENE HOLDINGS LIMITED
RICHARD AND SARAH BURDON
Submitters (31043)

EVIDENCE OF BENJAMIN ESPIE
(LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)
29th MAY 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Benjamin Espie. I reside in Queenstown. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (with honours) from Lincoln University and Bachelor of Arts from Canterbury University. I am a member of the Southern Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and was the Chairman of that branch between 2007 and 2016. Since November 2004 I have been a director of Vivian and Espie Limited, a specialist resource management and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown. Between March 2001 and November 2004, I was employed as Principal of Landscape Architecture by Civic Corporation Limited, a resource management consultancy company contracted to the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**).
- 1.2 The majority of my work involves advising clients regarding the protection of landscapes and amenity that the Resource Management Act 1991 provides and regarding the landscape provisions of various district and regional plans. I also produce assessment reports and evidence in relation to proposed development. The primary objective of these assessments and evidence is to ascertain the effects of proposed development in relation to landscape character and visual amenity.
- 1.3 Much of my experience has involved providing landscape and amenity assessments relating to resource consent applications and plan changes both on behalf of District Councils and private clients. I have compiled many assessment reports and briefs of Environment Court evidence relating to the landscape and amenity related aspects of proposed regimes of District Plan provisions in the rural areas of a number of districts. I have provided Environment Court evidence in relation to the landscape categorisation of various parts of the Upper Clutha Basin, in relation to a number of proposed plan changes in the area and in relation to many resource consent applications.
- 1.4 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained within the Environment Court Practice Note of November 2014 and agree to comply with it. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on information I have been given by another person. I confirm that I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed herein.

- 1.5 In preparing this evidence I have reviewed the relevant parts of a Section 42a report prepared by Ms Emily Grace on behalf of the QLDC and a statement of evidence prepared by Ms Bridget Gilbert dated 18 March 2020 (**Ms Gilbert's evidence**). I have also considered Part 2 Strategy (Chapters 3 to 6) of the decisions version of the Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) and the associated interim decisions of the Environment Court that relate to this part of the PDP¹.

2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 The purpose of this evidence is to assist the Hearings Panel on matters within my expertise of landscape architecture and landscape planning in relation to Submission 31043 on the Proposed District Plan. In relation to this submission, I have been asked by the submitter to prepare evidence in relation to the landscape and visual effects of the proposed area of Rural Visitor Zoning (**RVZ**) proposed to be named Lake Hawea Rural Visitor Zone in the area of The Camp at Lake Hawea.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 In relation to the proposed area of RVZ, Ms Gilbert's evidence expresses general agreement that the relevant area can absorb some visitor-related development but has some concerns regarding the degree of certainty that the notified RVZ provisions give in relation to the ultimate form of development that will occur. The relief sought in relation to the proposed RVZ has been amended in that additional restrictions are now proposed in relation to the future development of this area of zoning. I consider that the relief that is now sought is appropriate in terms of its landscape and visual effects and I consider that Ms Gilbert's concerns have been appropriately alleviated.

4. THE LAKE HAWEA OUTSTANDING NATURAL LANDSCAPE

- 4.1 Planning Maps 8 and 13 of the decisions-version PDP set out the extent of the Outstanding Natural Landscape (**ONL**) that includes Lake Hawea. As I will expand upon subsequently, the site of the relevant proposed RVZ sits within this ONL.

¹ 1 Environment Court decisions [2019] NZEnvC 160, 205 and 206.

- 4.5** The relevant ONL is a vast mountain-and-lakes landscape. Landscape categorisation is obviously something that is done at a very broad scale. At such a scale, the landscape within which the site sits is dominated by natural patterns and elements and is majestic, dramatic and highly memorable.
- 4.6** I note that the Policies under Section 3.2.5 of Annexure 1 to the Interim Environment Court Decision [2019] NZEnvC 205 (and described in that decision), direct that the landscape attributes and values of an identified ONL are protected.
- 4.10** Regarding landscape character, I consider that the important attributes of the Lake Hawea landscape that mean it is an ONL can be summarised as:
- its vastness and openness;
 - its generally unmodified character when assessed as a whole, i.e. considerably intact natural biophysical / ecosystem patterns and processes, geomorphological processes and the fact that the vast majority of its margins are unoccupied;
 - its dramatic and sublime aesthetic characteristics, particularly very long views across its surface to surrounding mountain ranges;
 - its legibility as a naturally formed lake, being immediately recognisable as such; and
 - constantly changing and dramatic transient values (largely aesthetic) associated with the seasons, changing light throughout the day, atmospheric and climatic conditions.
- 4.11** Notwithstanding the above, it must be noted that the outflow and level of Lake Hawea are controlled and the lake level is significantly higher than its natural level.
- 4.12** Around the perimeter of Lake Hawea, there are only a few locations where a node of human occupation exists. These are locations such as Lake Hawea Township, the existing campground area and its associated designation, Gladstone, Dingleburn Valley, Hunter Valley Station homestead and Kidd's Bush, as well as Glen Dene homestead.
- 4.13** I consider that the presence of human occupation, modification and buildings in the existing campground and boat ramp area, and its location immediately adjacent to Lake Hawea

Township, mean that the specific location of the proposed RVZ does not particularly contribute to the important landscape character qualities that make the Lake Hawea landscape an ONL. I therefore consider that, in terms of landscape character, this is a location with potential to absorb some change; much more so than most locations within this landscape.

- 4.14** In broad terms (as I will expand upon), I consider that appropriately controlled rural visitor activity in this location will alter the character of the immediate vicinity but I do not see that this would degrade the characteristics of the landscape overall. I consider that a node of rural visitor activity as proposed can sit comfortably in this location without diminishing the character of the Lake Hawea ONL.

5. THE PROPOSED AREA OF RVZ

- 5.1** The submission seeks RVZ over an area as shown on Appendix 1 of this evidence. The area consists of 3 parcels:

- Lot 1 DP 418972 of 1.4ha;
- Lot 2 DP 418972 of 5.6ha;
- Pt Sec 2 Blk II Lower Hawea SD of 15.7ha.

- 5.2** As can be seen on the aerial photograph that is the base of Appendix 1, I understand that the bulk of Pt Sec 2 Blk II Lower Hawea SD is currently used for the commercial camping operation. I also understand that Designation 175 as per the decisions-version of the PDP provides for commercial camping activities over all of this allotment and site coverage of built form over approximately 40% of the whole.

- 5.3** Since the time of lodging submission 31043, the relief sought has been refined in that additional restrictions in relation to the area of RVZ are now incorporated into the relevant provisions (as will be detailed in the evidence of Mr White). In summary, the proposed area of RVZ will provide for rural visitor activities such that:

- All buildings are of at least a controlled activity status;

- Residential activity is non-complying;
- The maximum total building coverage for the proposed area of RVZ shall be 7%;
- There shall be a variable allowable building height for buildings within the area of RVZ as per the plan that I attach to this evidence as Appendix 2;
- A 20 metre wide buffer area is proposed immediately adjacent to the road corridor of State Highway 6 (SH6).

5.4 The provisions summarised above are proposed to be incorporated into the RVZ provisions as set out in Mr White's evidence. In general terms, the RVZ provides for dense nodes of visitor activities set within the rural landscapes of the district. The particular relief that the submission seeks will bring about a node of visitor activity (or rather will enable the growth of an existing node of visitor activity) but at a much lower density than the other areas of RVZ within the district. I understand that the submitters envisage the proposed RVZ area developing as a green, treed lakeside area with a low building coverage that provides visitor accommodation units, camping opportunities (including permanent or semi-permanent "glamping" tents²), and associated facilities such as ablutions, eateries, etc. The maximum 7% building coverage rule would mean that the majority of the RVZ area consists of outdoor space. I consider that this outdoor space is most likely to develop as treed spaces combined with open lawn spaces and smaller areas of paving, paths, etc. I note that any subdivision or building activity will be at least a controlled activity, with landscaping as one of the aspects of control (and particular provisions relating to the State Highway Buffer Area). I consider that the consent authority will be able to use its controls (and/or discretion) to ensure:

- a consistent, appropriate and high-amenity landscape outcome across the area of the RVZ;
- that built form is visually softened and integrated into its setting;
- the external materials and colours of buildings are such that they are integrated into their landscape setting and have consistency and logic across the zone area.

² Glamping is a term that is defined by en.oxforddictionaries.com as "A form of camping involving accommodation and facilities more luxurious than those associated with traditional camping".

- That the 20m wide buffer area adjacent to SH6 is appropriately treated.

6. EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 6.1** As discussed above, the rural land adjacent to Lake Hawea is part of a vast mountain-and-lakes landscape that is categorised as an ONL by both the ODP and the PDP. Landscape categorisation is obviously something that needs to be done at a very broad scale and I concur with this categorisation; the landscape is dominated by natural patterns and elements and is majestic, dramatic and highly memorable.
- 6.2** At a finer scale, the area of the submission site is already considerably used as a commercial camping operation in the form of a holiday park. The character of this particular area is typical of a New Zealand holiday park camp with tent sites, permanent caravans, cabins, ablutions, kitchens and common-room buildings. There are also a number of semi-permanent glamping tents. This pattern of camping activity generally covers the 15.5 hectares of Pt Sec 2 Blk II Lower Hawea SD (shown on Appendix 1), however, the block is also considerably treed with a mix of mature exotics, both evergreen and deciduous.
- 6.3** The existing camping activity extends in a westerly direction to the western boundary of Pt Sec 2 Blk II Lower Hawea SD. Lot 2 DP 418972 to the immediate west of this (and that is proposed to be contained within the RVZ) is currently covered in dense trees (mostly sycamore and eucalypt). Very roughly, the eastern two-thirds of this block is sloping but not prohibitively steep, while the western third of this block is very steep. Therefore, most of this block is considerably lower than the road (SH6). Much of this steep western part of the block is within the 20-metre State Highway Buffer area shown on the proposed Structure Plan (Appendix 2).
- 6.4** Lot 1 DP 418972 of 1.4ha is a small parcel to the north of the other two. The southernmost part of this parcel takes the form of a small rounded hill landform that is largely covered in self-seeded exotic conifers (which also extend over the opposite side of SH6, covering a large area in total). The rest of the parcel is open and rolling, generally covered in rank grass and bracken fern.
- 6.5** The proposed zoning would have the effect of extending a disbursement of buildings and associated activity out from the existing camping area and over the entirety of the proposed RVZ area. As discussed above, the actual density of built form would be low and the consent authority

would have control over landscape treatment, which (when considered in light of the Objectives, Policies of the RVZ and the controls that the Council can use) means that a relatively green, soft and vegetated type of pattern will emerge. Human activity in the form of camping, accommodation buildings and associated built form will certainly be a prominent part of character within the RVZ, but open green spaces and treed areas will balance with this.

6.6 As notified, the RVZs of the district are all located within ONLs. As discussed, the overall intention of these areas of zoning is that they take the form of a discrete node of activity set within a broad landscape that remains unsullied by the presence of the area of more intense land use. To paraphrase, the Objectives and Policies of the notified RVZ seek to:

- maintain or enhance the values of the landscape within which the relevant RVZ sits;
- maintain or enhance landscape character and visual amenity;
- encourage enhancement of nature conservation values³.

6.7 I set out the important qualities of landscape character associated with the Lake Hawea landscape in paragraph 4.10 above. I consider that these are the qualities that make the landscape an ONL.

6.8 In relation to landscape character, the proposed area of RVZ is immediately adjacent to Lake Hawea Township. It is in an area that is already used as a commercial camping operation. In terms of landscape patterns, I consider that the existing modification and occupation in this area means that this specific location is different to the vast majority of land adjacent to Lake Hawea (which is generally open, unoccupied and very largely unmodified). I therefore consider that the extension of visitor accommodation activities that the proposed RVZ represents will not significantly detract from the important landscape character qualities that make the Lake Hawea landscape an ONL (as listed above). I therefore consider that, in terms of landscape character, this is a location with potential to absorb change; much more so than most locations within this landscape.

6.9 Overall, I consider that the relief sought by the relevant submission will bring about an extension and intensification of existing visitor-associated activity over a logically contained area that is

³ This bullet-point list represents a paraphrasing of the Objectives and Policies of Section 46.2 of the notified Proposed District Plan as they relate to landscape matters.

already modified and is immediately adjacent to Lake Hawea Township. A more varied visitor accommodation node will result that may include apartment-style, villa-style or hotel-style visitor accommodation (provided that building height and coverage accords with the proposed standards)⁴. The existing visitor node will grow and intensify but will be restricted to this one small part of the Lake Hawea perimeter, immediately adjacent to the township. I consider that there is considerable logic and merit in this outcome in terms of landscape planning, I also consider that the important qualities of the Lake Hawea ONL will be maintained in an unsullied state.

7. EFFECTS ON VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY

7.1 In relation to views of the proposed RVZ area:

- There are views available into the area from the immediately adjacent stretch of SH6. However, bearing in mind the proposed State Highway Buffer, the developable part of the proposed zone area is considerably lower in elevation than the road surface. Therefore, views are very largely over the proposed zone area, with the lake and mountains beyond very much being the focus. Obviously, these views are experienced at highway speeds.
- The proposed RVZ area is visible from the southernmost part of the surface of Lake Hawea; very roughly south of a line running between the northern end of the proposed RVZ and Bushy Creek.
- The proposed RVZ area is visible from parts of Lake Hawea Township that are oriented to the north and from parts of the lake edge between the township and approximately Bushy Creek, including the collection of dwellings at Gladstone. Indicative views from these locations are depicted in the photographs of Appendix 3.

7.2 In current views that are available from the above locations, the site currently appears as a heavily treed, relatively flat terrace or fan area in front of the steep, dramatic mountain slopes. Looking at Photograph 2 of Appendix 3, the exotic trees of the site appear connected to the exotics that cover the lower mountain slopes to the immediate left (i.e. opposite the junction of SH6 and Hawea Control Structure Road). As one's eyes move to the right (north), the exotic

⁴ In my understanding, any development within the proposed RVZ that is within the Council owned land (i.e. Pt Sec 2 Blk II shown on Appendix 1) will be subject to agreement with the Council as landowner.

trees stop and the landscape becomes the open, majestic mountain-and-lakes landscape that epitomises the Lake Hawea ONL. Within the site of the proposed RVZ, visitor accommodation activity is visually apparent and, at times of the year, very obvious. However, again, the focus of these views is to the north across the long lake surface.

7.3 As mentioned, views from the relevant stretch of SH6 are very largely over the site to the lake beyond. I consider that a node of visitor accommodation development in the subject location would appear logical and not discordant with an expected aesthetic pattern. However, I consider that high or prominent built form close to the road could potentially block or significantly alter the visual amenity that is gained by northbound travellers passing Hawea. Dense or enclosing built form in this location could degrade the visual amenity experience of passing Hawea. In this regard, I consider that the proposed 7% building coverage standard, the State Highway Buffer and associated provisions and the consent authority's control over landscaping are all important measures. These will ensure that:

- The visual pattern that develops across the zone area will be dominated by greenspace and vegetation;
- All buildings will be significantly lower in elevation than the road surface and will be at least 20 metres from it in horizontal distance. The predominant views from the adjacent stretch of SH6 will be over the top of dense treed vegetation and future development to the mountain-and-lakes vista;
- The consent authority will have control over the treatment of the State Highway Buffer area. The proposed provisions are such that this area will remain treed and natural character will incrementally increase over the long term, such purely exotic trees will not be relied upon for visual screening and that natural character as experienced from the highway will be enhanced.

7.4 I therefore consider that for users of SH6, visual amenity can be appropriately maintained while providing for the RVZ as proposed by the submission.

7.5 For observers that are to the east of the proposed zone location (i.e. those on the lake, in Lake Hawea Township or on the lake edge), the proposed zoning will alter the visual appearance of the zone area. With reference to the photographs of Appendix 3, the zone area itself is likely to

become more visually complex. More built form will be visible (albeit in a scattered pattern within the zone area, with considerable greenspace and vegetation)⁵. More activity, people and general busyness are likely to be apparent.

7.6 I consider that given the:

- location of the visual change that will occur; i.e. in an area that already accommodates visible human modification and visitor activity and is immediately adjacent to Lake Hawea Township and SH6;
- nature of the visual change that will occur; i.e. one that consists of scattered buildings within a defined area in conjunction with considerable greenspace and vegetation;

the effect of the proposed zoning on the views and visual amenity that is enjoyed by observers to the east will not be adverse to any significant degree. Again, the development that will ultimately occur will appear logical, tied to existing development and not visually unattractive. The composition of views that are currently available will not fundamentally change.

8. THE EVIDENCE OF MS GILBERT

8.1 Ms Gilbert's evidence comments on the relief sought by Submission 31043, which did not include the additional restrictions that are now proposed as set out in my paragraph 5.3. (perhaps most relevantly the 7% maximum building coverage provision and the provision relating to the State Highway Buffer area and the management of its vegetation). Regarding the relief sought by the submission, Ms Gilbert concludes that an area of RVZ on the submission site is likely to be appropriate if additional assessment work is carried out and the relief is refined.

8.2 Ms Gilbert's evidence refers to the following issues on which I consider further comments from me may be helpful to the Commission:

- the landscape sensitivity of the submission site;
- favourable aspects of the submission site and associated opportunities;
- potential constraints to development of the site;

⁵ As mentioned in footnote 4, Council as landowner will have control over development within the Council-owned part of the propose area of zoning.

- additional analysis required to support a RVZ on the site;
- Ms Gilbert's overall recommendations.

Landscape sensitivity

8.3 The notified RVZ provisions include the identification of areas of “High Landscape Sensitivity” and “Moderate-High Landscape Sensitivity” within the notified areas of RVZ. Ms Gilbert finds that:

“In light of the notified RVZ provisions, it is my opinion that the landscape sensitivity of the subject site rates towards the mid to higher end of the spectrum as a consequence of its visibility from Lake Hawea, the lake edge, walking tracks and the state highway (at least in part) and the potential for RVZ development here to undermine the existing township edge”⁶.

8.4 At a number of points in her evidence, Ms Gilbert mentions that the submission’s relief includes no control on building coverage and the passage above, is prefaced by “*in the light of the notified provisions*”. I agree with Ms Gilbert's comments in that if we consider the site in light of a RVZ with no building coverage controls, then certainly, the submission site would be sensitive in relation to the degree of development that would be enabled⁷. Unrestricted, very dense built development across the entirety of the submission site would substantially alter the character and values of the site and would potentially undermine the town edge of Hawea.

8.5 If we consider the relief as it is now proposed to be (particularly taking account of the 7% maximum building coverage provision and the provisions relating to the State Highway Buffer), I do not consider that the site is particularly sensitive to this form of development; I do not consider that this form of development (as described in summary in my paragraph 5.4) significantly risks compromising the character or values associated with the site or the broader landscape. The main reasons for this are:

- the low density of development that will result from the relief including very significant open space and vegetation, along with the various other controls that will apply to development;

⁶ Statement of evidence of Bridget Mary Gilbert, 18 March 2020, paragraph 7.10.

⁷ Ms Gilbert provides a useful definition of landscape sensitivity in paragraph 4.13 of her evidence.

- The existing modification of the specific vicinity of the submission site including the boat ramp and associated spaces and activity as well as the existing commercial motor camp, including its buildings, roads and seasonal busy visitor activity;
- The fact that the submission site is adjacent to Lake Hawea Township and that this node of activity/modification represents a discrete and very small portion of the perimeter of Lake Hawea, which overall has a high natural character.

8.6 I accept that for some RVZs (which do not have the much more restrictive provisions applying to them that are proposed in this case), mapping areas of High and Moderate-High Landscape Sensitivity may have merit. Given the form of development that the proposed relief seeks (and the control that the Council will retain over the land that it owns), I consider that the only part of the submission site with particular sensitivity is the State Highway Buffer Area. I agree that this area should be free of built development and should be kept in a generally treed state, therefore, I support the proposed relief that this area is mapped as an area of High Landscape Sensitivity.

Favourable aspects of the submission site and associated opportunities

8.6 Ms Gilbert sets out a number of attributes of the site that weigh in favour of her opinion that the submission site *"has the ability to successfully absorb a modest level of rural visitor development subject to the implementation of a range of controls"*⁸. In summary, these attributes are:

- The visually discrete nature of (parts of) the site;
- The established modification of the site;
- The spatially discrete nature of the site, providing limited risk of future development creep;
- The site provides areas of flat land that are devoid of noteworthy vegetation and that have good access, sun and amenity.

8.7 Ms Gilbert then goes on to set out opportunities that these attributes bring. In summary, these are the opportunity to:

⁸ Statement of evidence of Bridget Mary Gilbert, 18 March 2020, paragraph 7.10.

- Restore the site and lake edge and the retention and enhancement of existing vegetation including native revegetation and pest control;
- Integrate public access along the lake edge;
- Use the existing vehicle access from the state highway;
- Use landform and vegetation to integrate new built development into the site.

8.8 I agree with all of the above. Again, Ms Gilbert was considering the site in relation to the relief set out in the submission, which did not include the various restrictions that are now incorporated into the proposed relief. In response to the above, my additional comments are:

- Public access is available entirely along the lake edge in the vicinity of the submission site. This will continue to be the case and new development enabled by the proposed relief will be such that visitors can access the lake margins. The margins in the area of the submission site are attractive and easily walkable. A formed track allows walking connection, adjacent to the lake edge, from the submission site to Lake Hawea Township.
- Vehicle access to the site off the state highway is well established and is not proposed to change. The established vehicle access services the current campground operation and the boat ramp and reserve area.
- A maximum of 7% building coverage will mean that built form is well spaced and covers only a small total area. Additionally, the State Highway Buffer 20m buffer excludes the steepest land from development and Council retain control over the location of built form. This will mean that buildings will be located in suitable specific locations within the site such that landform and vegetation (over which Council will retain control) will allow integration of the built form into its setting.
- Landscaping is a matter over which Council will retain control, with specific provisions relating to the State Highway Buffer. Given other broader provisions within the zone (such as Policy 46.2.1.3), I consider that Council can use its controls to bring about a result that enhances the natural character of the State Highway Buffer (including incremental removal

of problematic exotic species (largely sycamore) and incremental native revegetation) and the continuation of the current park-like character of the campground area.

Potential constraints to development of the site

8.9 Ms Gilbert sets out some issues that she sees as constraints to potential development of the site as follows:

- *Close-range views from SH6 of two-storey and potentially quite intensive and/or inappropriately designed built development (assuming the 10m setback, no building coverage limit and no external appearance controls apply) that may detract from landscape values (naturalness and aesthetic values).*
- *Mid and longer-range views from the lake, lake edge, township, Gladstone and walking tracks in the area to potentially quite intensive and/or inappropriately designed built development (assuming the 10m setback, no building coverage limit and no external appearance controls apply) that may detract from landscape values (naturalness and aesthetic values).*
- *Loss of the perception of the area as a very low-key green node of development as a consequence of potentially quite intensive and/or inappropriately designed built development (assuming the 10m setback, no building coverage limit and no external appearance controls apply). This change in landscape character has the potential to undermine the integrity of a defensible urban edge around the western side of the Lake Hawea Township and contribute the perception of development creep northwards along the western side of the lake that may be detract from landscape values (naturalness, aesthetic values and shared and recognised values)⁹.*

8.10 I agree with Ms Gilbert that if we assume a 10m setback from the highway, no building coverage limit and no external appearance controls, then particularly dense built development could occur all across the submission site, right up to 10m from the highway. This would certainly result in adverse effects on the visual amenity of a highway user, would create a visually incongruent element in longer range views and would be an unusual area of urban expansion from Lake Hawea Township.

⁹ Ibid, paragraph 7.17.

- 8.11** The intention, and the result of the now-proposed provisions, are that the submission site is developed in a particularly low-density way that is dominated by open greenspace and vegetation; a park-like, pleasant lakeside campground and visitor accommodation node. I consider that the provisions that are now proposed will achieve this and will avoid the type of outcomes that Ms Gilbert is concerned about in the above-cited passages. In particular, a 20 metre (rather than 10 metre) vegetated highway buffer is proposed (which is identified as an area of high landscape sensitivity) and a 7% maximum building coverage is proposed.
- 8.12** My findings regarding the effects of the relief as it is now sought on landscape character and visual amenity are set out in Sections 6 and 7 of this evidence. I consider that the views of SH6 users will be appropriately maintained. For observers that are to the east of the proposed zone location (i.e. those on the lake, in Lake Hawea Township or on the lake edge), I consider that the effect on the views and visual amenity will not be adverse to any significant degree. The development that will be enabled will appear logical, tied to existing development and not visually unattractive. I consider that the character of the submission site itself will remain as a "*low-key green node of development*", as described by Ms Gilbert, albeit that it will somewhat intensify and will include more built form and activity. A low-density node of visitor activity that is dominated by greenspace will sit on the periphery of Lake Hawea Township, as it does now.

Additional analysis required to support a RVZ on the site.

- 8.13** Following on from her findings as discussed above, Ms Gilbert recommends that the following information is provided:
- scaled aerial photographs of the site with contour information;
 - analysis of the zone of theoretical visibility of the built form that would be enabled by the proposed relief;
 - commentary on the landscape values of the landscape setting of the site.
- 8.14** Again, Ms Gilbert's recommendations undoubtedly relate to her (correct) interpretation that the relief sought by the submission included only a 10m setback from SH6, no building coverage limit and no external appearance controls.

8.15 In relation to the visual catchment or zone of theoretical visibility from which built form may be seen, it is relevant that now only 7% of the submission site is proposed to be able to be built on. Therefore, views to the site will not be of a heavily built area, they will be views to an area of considerable vegetation and open space, with some buildings within it. In this regard, I do not see that visibility of the site will automatically lead to adverse effects on visual amenity. I discuss effects on views and visual amenity in Section 7 of this evidence and describe the catchment from which the site may be seen in paragraph 7.1. Given the existence of the current commercial campground operation, my overall consideration in relation to visual amenity is that when the site is visible as part of a particular view, it will appear logical, largely vegetated and treed and not visually unattractive.

8.17 I agree with Ms Gilbert that the relevant interim decisions of the Environment Court regarding the Strategy (Section 2) section of the PDP direct us to consider the specific attributes that a particular ONL has when considering effects on that ONL. I have done that in Section 4 of this evidence. As set out in Section 6 of this evidence, I ultimately conclude that, in relation to landscape character, there is considerable logic and merit in this outcome sought by the proposed relief and the important qualities of the Lake Hawea ONL will be maintained in an unsullied state.

Ms Gilbert's overall recommendations

8.18 Ultimately, Ms Gilbert concludes that "*a proposed RVZ at the Lake Hawea Holiday Park is likely to be appropriate*"¹⁰ if the information set out in my paragraph 8.13 is provided and if:

- buildings are a restricted discretionary activity; or
- a location-specific structure plan is proposed; or
- some combination of the two.

8.19 As has been set out in this evidence (and also in the evidence of Mr White), the relief that is now proposed includes:

¹⁰ Ibid, paragraph 7.18.

- buildings being at least a controlled activity, with matters of control including landform modification, landscaping and the compatibility of building design with landscape and visual amenity;
- a maximum total building coverage for the proposed area of RVZ being 7% (a non-complying status would apply for coverage above this);
- a variable allowable building height for buildings within the area of RVZ;
- a State Highway Buffer area immediately adjacent SH6 with specific provisions relating to its vegetative management.

8.20 I consider that these additional matters significantly reduce the potential effects of the proposed relief when compared to that which Ms Gilbert assessed. Under these provisions, the submission site would develop so as to be relatively minimally built with ample open space and the Council having control over building design and landscape treatment. I consider that the Council and community can have confidence in the landscape and visual amenity result that will come from the proposed relief.

9. CONCLUSIONS

9.1 The relief that is sought have been amended since the time of the submission. Development enabled by the sought area of RVZ will be very considerably less dense than that of other RVZs and will be subject to a number of controls.

9.2 The proposed RVZ will sit close to Hawea Township and will take in the existing commercial motor camp. Nonetheless, it is within the broader mountains-and-lake ONL that is characterised by vastness, openness, generally unmodified character and dramatic aesthetics. Due to the existing modification within the submission site and its adjacency to Hawea Township, the specific location of the proposed RVZ does not particularly contribute to the important landscape character qualities that make the Lake Hawea landscape and ONL. In terms of landscape character, the site is a location with potential to absorb some change; much more so than most locations within this landscape.

- 9.3** The proposed zoning would have the effect of extending a disbursement of visitor-related buildings and associated activity out from the existing camping area and over the entirety of the proposed RVZ area. The actual density of built form would be very low and the Council will have control over a number of aspects of development such that a relatively green, soft and vegetated type of pattern will emerge. A densely treed 20-metre wide buffer area of steep ground will sit adjacent to the State Highway, within which natural character will be incrementally enhanced.
- 9.4** In relation to landscape character, the existing modification/occupation and the immediate adjacency to Hawea Township mean that this specific location is different to the vast majority of land adjacent to Lake Hawea (which is generally open, unoccupied and very largely unmodified). The extension of visitor accommodation activities that the proposed RVZ represents will not significantly detract from the important landscape character qualities that make the Lake Hawea landscape an ONL.
- 9.5** In relation to views and visual amenity, the State Highway Buffer area and associated provisions will mean that the visual amenity of a highway user very much continue to be dominated by the lake and mountains. While some additional development will be discernible (over and above the currently visible visitor activity), it will generally be below the important lines of sight to the broader landscape and/or will be very significantly screened by vegetation. Visual amenity will not be detracted from to any significant degree. In views from the east (the lake and Hawea township/shore area), an intensification of existing visitor occupation/activity will be evident. However, this will be in an area that currently accommodates visible activity (at times of the year very apparent) and will be of a low density that involves significant open space and existing vegetation. Development that will ultimately occur will appear logical, tied to existing development and Hawea Township and not visually unattractive. The composition of views that are currently available will not fundamentally change nor be degraded.
- 9.6** I agree with much of Ms Gilbert's evidence in that development of the site that is unrestricted in terms of density and setback from SH6 would be likely to have some significant adverse effects in relation to landscape character and visual amenity. I also agree with Ms Gilbert that the submission site has the ability to absorb rural visitor development subject to the implementation of a number of controls. I consider that the relief that is now proposed alleviates the concerns if Ms Gilbert regarding the submission. I consider that the site will remain as a "*low-key green node of development*", as described by Ms Gilbert, albeit that it will intensify. A low-density node of

visitor activity that is dominated by greenspace will sit on the periphery of Lake Hawea Township, as it does now.

- 9.7** If we envisage the District Plan providing for visitor growth within the district for a decade once operative, I consider that, in relation to landscape planning considerations, the relief sought is appropriate. It will expand an existing operation that sits in a logical and appropriate location.

ATTACHED APPENDICES

- 1 A PLAN OF THE PROPOSED RURAL VISITOR ZONE AREA.
- 2 THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE PLAN.
- 3 PHOTOGRAPHS.

Ben Espie

vivian+espie

29th MAY 2020





To Makarora

Lot 1
DP 418972
1.3903 Ha

Lot 2
DP 418972
5.5612 Ha

Section 2
Block II
15.686 Ha

State Highway 6

Lake Hawea

To Hawea

- Rural Visitor Zone
- High Landscape Sensitivity - State Highway Buffer

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**SUBMISSION 31043 - ESPIE EVIDENCE - APPENDIX 2:
STRUCTURE PLAN OF PROPOSED RVZ**

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Client & Location:
**Lake Hawea Holiday Park
Hawea**

Purpose & Drawing Title:
**Lake Hawea Rural Visitor Zone
Zone Plan**

Surveyed by:	LIDAR	Original Size:	Scale:
Designed by:	-	A3	1:4000 @ A3
Drawn by:	AGM		
Checked by:	KAB		
Approved by:	DLW	DO NOT SCALE	
Job No:	DWG No:	Sheet No:	Revision No:
W6220	001	100	1
			Date Created:
			27/05/2020



To Makarora

State Highway 6

To Hawea

Lake Hawea

-  Rural Visitor Zone
-  High Landscape Sensitivity - State Highway Buffer
-  5.5 metre Building Height Limit
-  8 metre Building Height Limit

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 STRUCTURE PLAN OF PROPOSED RVZ**

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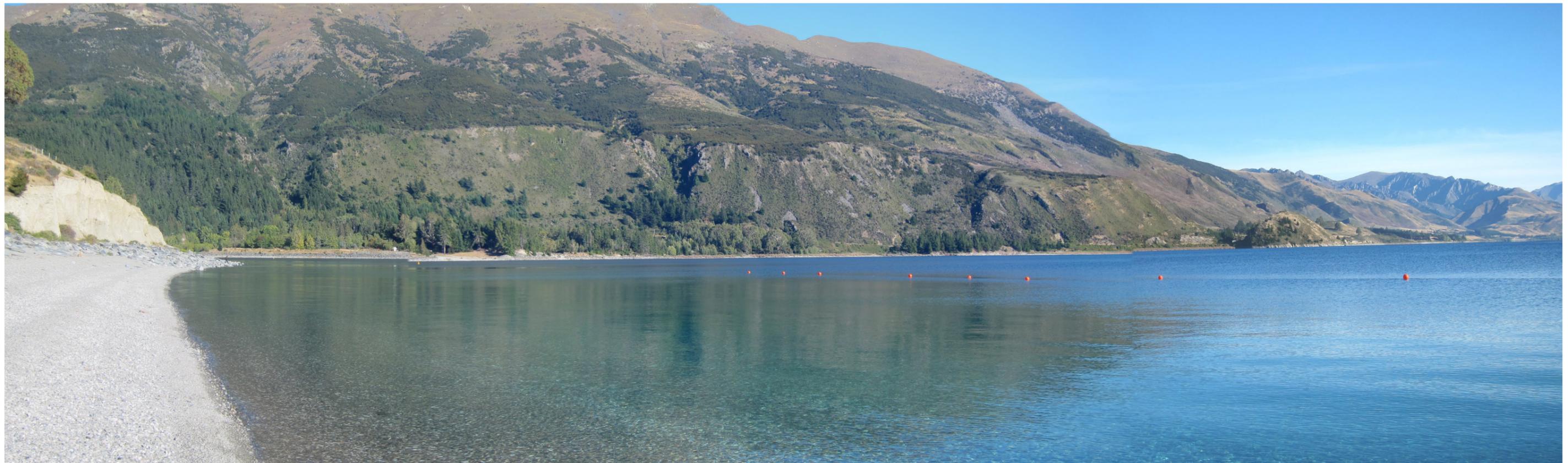
Client & Location:
**Lake Hawea Holiday Park
 Hawea**

Purpose & Drawing Title:
**Lake Hawea Rural Visitor Zone
 Structure & Height Plan**

Surveyed by:	LIDAR	Original Size:	Scale:
Designed by:	-	A3	1:4000 @ A3
Drawn by:	AGM		
Checked by:	KAB		
Approved by:	DLW	DO NOT SCALE	
Job No:	DWG No:	Sheet No:	Revision No:
W6220	001	200	1
		Date Created:	
		27/05/2020	



PANORAMA PHOTOGRAPH 1 - Looking towards the proposed Rural Visitor Zone from the reserve land adjacent to Flora Dora Parade.



PANORAMA PHOTOGRAPH 2 - Looking towards the Rural Visitor Zone from the beach adjacent to Hawea Esplanade Road.