

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

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

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of a private plan change to the  
Queenstown Lakes Proposed  
District Plan: Proposed Private Plan  
Change 1 The Hills Resort Zone

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF BRIDGET MARY GILBERT  
ON BEHALF OF QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LANDSCAPE EFFECTS**

**13 February 2026**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 3

2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE..... 5

3. THRZ PPC..... 12

4. LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY ..... 13

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT, RELEVANT STATUTORY  
CONTEXT AND PPC PROVISIONS..... 14

6. MATTERS RAISED IN SUBMISSIONS ..... 15

7. EVALUATION OF LANDSCAPE-RELATED EFFECTS ..... 19

8. CONCLUSION ..... 25

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 I have been engaged by the Council to undertake a landscape review of The Hills Resort Zone Private Plan Change (**THRZ PPC**). In doing so, I have undertaken a peer review assessment of the requestor's Landscape Report, and addressed matters raised in submissions and further submissions relating to the landscape effects of the THRZ PPC.
- 1.2 To assist in my assessment, I undertook site visits including to (or adjacent) the properties of submitters that have raised landscape-related concerns.
- 1.3 I consider that the assessment methodology applied in the Landscape Report aligns with landscape assessment best practice, as recommended in Te Tangi a te Manu (**TTatM**).
- 1.4 In preparing my evidence, I have taken into account that the requestor now proposes amendments in response to the submission by the Drapers (submitter #13) that:
- (a) provide for a reduction in the ground level RL and building height of 1m for various HSs; and
  - (b) limit the role of the new Hogans Gully Road access and clarify that the new access from Hogans Gully Road shall not be used as a through road for vehicles from other parts of THRZ.
- 1.5 In my opinion, the eight House Sites (**HSs**) in the southern part of the site that sit within the Speargrass Flat valley catchment (i.e. HSs9-16) introduce an appreciable landscape change to the landscape outcome anticipated by the PDP. Such a landscape change has the potential to be contrary to what I understand to be the key landscape policy test for development in THRZ, i.e. Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) THRZ Objective 47.2.1.
- 1.6 PDP Objective 47.2.1 requires development to comprise an integrated golf resort development that maintains the landscape character and amenity values of THRZ and the surrounding environment.

- 1.7 In my opinion, development that does not achieve this landscape outcome is likely to generate more than minor adverse landscape-related effects.
- 1.8 For this reason, I consider that a number of refinements to the PPC as proposed are required to manage landscape-related effects. As discussed in my evidence, those refinements relate to:
- (a) a combination of ground-level, roof height and screening of the proposed new HSs in the Speargrass Flat valley catchment;
  - (b) updating the Structural Planting Areas (**SPA**) strategy to include the three open, elevated, flatter parts of the southern portion of THRZ to achieve a coordinated and cohesive landscape strategy; and
  - (c) including a Landscape Amenity Management Areas (**LAMA**) strategy along the eastern edge of the site, in the vicinity of deleted A7 Activity Area, to screen views from the proposed walking/bike trail into the property at 214 McDonnell Road.
- 1.9 Having taken into account landscape-related matters raised in submissions and further submissions, and assuming the amendments I recommend in my evidence are incorporated, I consider that:
- (a) the landscape-related effects of the development enabled by THRZ PPC change will be minor;
  - (b) the development outcome will maintain the landscape character and amenity values of THRZ and the surrounding environment, making it appropriate from a landscape perspective.
- 1.10 My conclusions are subject to:
- (a) my review of annotated Visual Simulations with HSs labelled and a Viewpoint Location plan that shows the Structure Plan layout (on a scaled aerial base with contours); and

- (b) any proposed changes to the new access on Hogans Gully Road (noting the Council's traffic expert recommends shifting that access to the east of the current proposed location).

## **2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

2.1 My full name is Bridget Mary Gilbert. I am a Landscape Architect and Director of Bridget Gilbert Landscape Architecture Ltd, Auckland. I have held this position since 2005.

### **Qualifications and Experience**

2.2 I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Horticulture from Massey University and a postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Lincoln College. I am an associate of the Landscape Institute (UK) and a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects. I am an Independent Hearing Commissioner for Auckland Council and have also been (and currently am) a member of a Fast-track Consent Panel.

2.3 I have practised as a Landscape Architect for over thirty years in both New Zealand and England. Upon my return to New Zealand, I worked with Boffa Miskell Ltd in its Auckland office for seven years. I have been operating my own practice for the last twenty years based in Auckland.

2.4 During the course of my career, I have been involved in a wide range of work in expert landscape evaluation, assessment, and advice throughout New Zealand including:

- (a) landscape assessment in relation to regional and district plan policy;
- (b) preparation of structure plans for rural and coastal developments;
- (c) conceptual design and landscape assessment of infrastructure, rural, coastal, and urban development; and
- (d) detailed design and implementation supervision of infrastructure, rural, coastal, and urban projects.

2.5 I was appointed as one of three peer reviewers of the Landscape Assessment Guidelines project (including natural character) under the direction of Tuia Pita Ora (the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects). That work has culminated in *Te Tangi a te Manu (TTatM)* (Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines) which was unanimously adopted by Tuia Pita Ora in May 2020. TTatM is accepted by the landscape profession and the Environment Court as the most up-to-date, best practice landscape assessment methodology in New Zealand.

#### **Experience relevant to the Queenstown Lakes District**

2.6 In relation to Queenstown, I have previously been engaged by Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC** or **Council**) to provide landscape advice and evidence on various matters and topics associated with the Council level hearings, and Environment Court appeals, on the Queenstown-Lakes Proposed District Plan (**PDP**). This includes:

- (a) Environment Court appeals: PDP Topic 2 – Rural Landscapes, Topic 22 – Jacks Point, Topic 23 – various Queenstown and Upper Clutha Rezoning (including Ski Area Subzones, rezoning of land adjacent or within ONF/Ls and within RCL, Walter Peak Rural Tourism Zone, Rural Visitor Zones), Topics 30 and 31 – Wakatipu Basin (text and various rezonings, including Millbrook Resort Zone, Jacks Point Zone and The Hills Resort Zone), Priority Area Landscape Schedules (**PA Landscape Schedules**); and
- (b) Council hearings: PDP Stage 2 Wakatipu Basin, Stage 3B – Rural Visitor Zone and PA Landscape Schedules.

2.7 Of more specific relevance to this proposed plan change, I co-authored the Wakatipu Basin Land Use Planning Study (2017) and provided landscape advice in relation to the Environment Court Appeal for The Hills Resort Zone (**THRZ**) which informed the current PDP provisions for THRZ.

2.8 I have also assisted the Council with landscape peer review advice in relation to several resource consent and (Council) plan change and variation applications and, more recently, subdivision and land use consent applications at Ayrburn and the Ayrburn Screen Hub consent under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. This work includes the evaluation of development within and adjacent to resort zones of the

Queenstown Lakes District (**District**) and throughout the north-eastern part of the Wakatipu Basin.

- 2.9 Collectively, this background has given me a good knowledge of how the PDP operates, the development pressures across the District, the scale and character of development that is typically considered to be appropriate within the resort zone areas of the District, and the landscape values associated with the site and its context.

#### **Code of Conduct**

- 2.10 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 2023 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.

#### **Scope of evidence and documents relied on**

- 2.11 I have been engaged by the Council to undertake a landscape review of The Hills Resort Zone Private Plan Change (**THRZ PPC**). My review provides a peer review assessment of the requestor's Landscape Report<sup>1</sup>, and in addition, specifically addresses matters raised in submissions relating to the landscape effects of the THRZ PPC.

- 2.12 With this in mind, the focus of my evidence is to:
- (a) Confirm whether the assessment methodology used in the Landscape Report<sup>2</sup> that forms part of the application documents has been prepared in accordance with industry best practice.
  - (b) Confirm whether the information provided in the Landscape Report is adequate to enable a clear understanding of the landscape effects of the

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<sup>1</sup> Boffa Miskell, Landscape Report, dated 9 May 2025.

<sup>2</sup> As explained below, my review is of the updated version of the Landscape Report, provided with the requestor's response to the Council's request for information in May 2025 (Assessment undertaken by Boffa Miskell Limited, dated 9 May 2025).

proposal. This may include the identification of 'gaps' in the description of the existing environment, relevant statutory context, proposed development, and/or landscape effects discussion contained in the Landscape Report.

- (c) Provide comment as to whether the findings of the Landscape Report with respect to landscape-related effects are credible and justified.
  - (d) Specifically consider the submissions made in respect of landscape matters.
  - (e) Make recommendations with respect to landscape-related amendments to the provisions of the PPC in light of my review of the Landscape Report and relevant submissions.
- 2.13 I confirm that the landscape assessment approach recommended by TTatM has guided the preparation of my landscape comments.
- 2.14 The key documents I have used, or referred to, in forming my view while preparing this evidence are:
- (a) THRZ PPC request documents lodged on 14 November 2024, including:
    - i. Document 1: Request for Plan Change prepared by The Hills Resort Limited.
    - ii. Document 2: Requested changes to the Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan, prepared by Brown and Company Planning Group.
    - iii. Document 3: Assessment of Environmental Effects (**AEE**), prepared by Brown and Company Planning Group.
    - iv. Document 4: S32 Report, prepared by Brown and Company Planning Group.
    - v. Document 5: Master Planning Design Statement prepared by RBT Design.

- vi. Document 6: Landscape/Visual Assessment, prepared by Boffa Miskell Limited.
- (b) Council's Clause 23 Request for Information issued on 11 December 2024 (which I provided landscape expert input to). The scope of the Clause 23 Request is described in the s42A Report prepared by Craig Barr.
- (c) The requestor's Clause 23 Response received on 15 May 2025, and which corresponds to the **notified version of THRZ PPC** including:
- i. A: Updated Structure Plan and Indicative Landscape Amenity Management Areas (**LAMA**) plans (**Structure Plan and LAMA plans**).
  - ii. C: Overview of surrounding development context, prepared by Brown and Company Planning Group.
  - iii. D: Height Rationale.
  - iv. E: Final Landscape Assessment, prepared by Boffa Miskell Limited (**Landscape Report**).
  - v. F: Aerial Mapping (with Structure Plan layout including LAMAs, SPAs, and contours).
  - vi. G: Visual Simulations and Methodology Statement, prepared by Boffa Miskell Limited (noting that this document is described as Photomontages and Methodology Statement) (**Visual Simulations**).
  - vii. H: Email correspondence with The Queenstown Trail Trust (**QTT**).
  - viii. I: Proposed District Plan provisions, prepared by Brown and Company Planning Group.
  - ix. J: Request for Plan Change, prepared by Brown and Company Planning Group.
  - x. K: AEE, prepared by Brown and Company Planning Group.

- xi. M: Design Statement, prepared by RBT Design.
- (d) Submissions and further submissions that raise landscape-related concerns, being:
- i. #2: Jane Ellen Todd & Trustees of Graeme Todd Family Trust, 10 Advance Terrace.
  - ii. #4: Derek and Anna Brown, 18 Advance Terrace.
  - iii. #13: James and Janene Draper, 110 Hogans Gully Road.
  - iv. # 15: Simon Dan, 214 McDonnell Road.
  - v. # 16: Mark Williams, Queenstown Trail Trust.
  - vi. #20: Iris Weber and Dave Gibson, 63 Hogans Gully Road.
  - vii. Further Submission (**FS**) from Iris Weber and Dave Gibson, 63 Hogans Gully Road.
- (e) The letter from Brown & Co to the Council dated 15 January 2026 identifying modifications agreed between the requestor (The Hills Resort Limited (**THRL**)) and James and Janene Draper (submitter #13) (**Brown & Co letter**).

2.15 My evidence is based on the notified version of the plan change documents (set out in paragraph 2.14(c) above). I have also commented on the modifications to the proposed provisions set out in the Brown & Co letter in my evidence (see paragraph 2.14(e) above).

#### **Site Visit**

2.16 I have visited the site on several occasions, most recently in late October 2025. My October 2025 site visit was undertaken with the Council team and the requestor's consultants. Where I visited the submitters' properties, only the Council team was present.

- 2.17 Profile poles were installed by the requestor indicating: the extent and height of the House Sites (**HSs**) and LAMA mounding in the southern part of THRZ; the extent and height of the Sports Garden Activity Area (**SGAA**) and the revised extent and height of the A4 Activity Area. The requestor's team provided a geolocated version of the proposed plan change layout which allowed me to understand my location on site, relative to the proposed activity areas, HSs, access roads, LAMAs, and Structural Planting Areas (**SPAs**). The Council team provided a full set of the most up-to-date plans<sup>3</sup>, including marked up plans showing the location of the profile poles and a high-quality, A3 scale print version of the Visual Simulations relied on in the Landscape Report.
- 2.18 During this site visit I also visited the submitters' properties that have raised landscape-related concerns (10 and 18 Advance Terrace and 110 Hogans Gully Road)<sup>4</sup>, all the external viewpoints modelled in the Visual Simulations, and refamiliarized myself with the character of the local area. While I did not visit 63 Hogans Gully Road, I walked the road and parts of the PPC site adjacent to the property.
- 2.19 It is my understanding that there are no consented but unbuilt dwellings within the vicinity of the site that have the potential to change the landscape sensitivity of the receiving environment that is relevant to a landscape effects assessment of THRZ PPC.
- 2.20 I refer to Mr Barr's discussion of the Boxer Hill Trust (**BHT**) appeal site<sup>5</sup>. I understand the Requestor to have ownership interests in both the BHT and THRZ land holdings.
- 2.21 From a landscape perspective the outcome of the proposed rezoning (if it is accepted in any form) is that a change to the zoning from Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone to a zoning which is more enabling of residential activity on this site may have an influence on the capacity of the local area to absorb additional

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<sup>3</sup> i.e. the notified Clause 23 Response version of the plans.

<sup>4</sup> Noting that the landowner's planning consultant accompanied the Council team's site visit to 110 Hogans Gully Road.

<sup>5</sup> Noting that the appeal is understood to not be resolved and the requested zoning does not form part of the existing environment.

development within the THRZ, particularly as it relates to the location of the eleven new Home Site locations (HSs 6-16) in the southern portion of the THRZ.

- 2.22 Further (and from a landscape perspective), if the BHT land is rezoned to provide for residential activity, it would be preferable for the THRZ (and potentially, any new provisions relating to the BHT land) to encourage a cohesive and coordinated landscape design and management response across the boundary interface of THRZ and the BHT land that responds to landscape rather than landownership patterns. Such an outcome would, in my view, better align with the intentions of Chapters 24 and 47 to maintain landscape character and amenity values.
- 2.23 For completeness, I confirm that in my opinion, the recently consented development at Ayrburn does not alter the landscape sensitivity of the receiving environment due to the visually contained nature of that development and its general alignment with the development expectations of the PDP Ayrburn Structure Plan. I note that the Ayrburn Screen Hub (**ASH**) application under the Fast-track Approvals Act (2024) proposes urban development throughout the Ayrburn Structure Plan rural zoned land<sup>6</sup>, to the west of Mill Creek. No decision has been released in relation to the ASH application at the time of finalising my evidence.

### 3. THRZ PPC

- 3.1 A thorough description of the existing THRZ and proposed THRZ is provided in the Landscape Report. In summary, aspects of THRZ PPC relevant to my landscape evidence include:

- (a) amending the location and extent of existing Activity Areas (**AAs**) A1, A2, A4, A5, A7, A9, A10, A11<sup>7</sup>;

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<sup>6</sup> Comprising ASH Open Space Area and [rural] Residential Activity Area.

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Landscape Report Table on page 7.

- (b) establishing eleven additional HSs in the southern part of THRZ (with associated LAMAs and SPAs and location-specific building height and coverage controls)<sup>8</sup>;
- (c) reconfiguring the planting framework, access road and walking/bike trail network<sup>9</sup>; and
- (d) introducing three new AAs associated with the resort (i.e. SGAA, Golf Training Facility Activity Area and Helicopter Landing Area Activity Area<sup>10</sup>), along with consequential amendments to provisions arising from these changes.

#### 4. LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 In my opinion, the assessment methodology applied in the Landscape Report aligns with landscape assessment best practice, as recommended in TTatM.
- 4.2 Further, having visited each of the visual simulation viewpoints<sup>11</sup> with a correctly scaled hard copy of the visual simulations, I am comfortable that the visual simulation modelling generally accords with best practice<sup>12</sup> and is fit for purpose. That is subject to the comments below with respect to a potential discrepancy in the modelling of Viewpoint 7 and the labelling of the HSs across the material.
- 4.3 In forming this opinion, I am aware that visual simulations are a tool to assist experts, the public, and decisionmakers' understanding of adverse landscape (including visual amenity) effects; however, they do not form a substitute for evaluation in the field. This is because visual simulations inevitably capture a series of static views from specific vantage points, which is not how we visually experience the landscape. Rather we experience the landscape as a sequence of views as we move through an area and move our heads to take in a view.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid: 3.2.2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid: 3.2.3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid: Table on page 7.

<sup>11</sup> As shown on the viewpoint location plan in Figure 1 of the Appendix G Photomontages and Methodology Statement of Boffa Miskell, dated 7 May 2025. The nine viewpoints are listed on page 14 of the Landscape Report.

<sup>12</sup> NZILA Best Practice Guide: Visual Simulations (BPG 10.2).

4.4 I am also conscious that, relying on my experience of reviewing a wide range of visual simulations over the years by a range of specialists in that field, it is virtually impossible to perfectly replicate the human field of view.

4.5 For these reasons, I confirm that while the visual simulations have assisted my evaluation of the THRZ PPC, I primarily rely on my field work and careful review of the notified plans (including aerial photograph and contour data) and provisions (including proposed building height and coverage controls) in assessing landscape (including visual amenity) effects.

4.6 With reference to the modelling discrepancy and labelling queries mentioned above:

(a) It appears that HS 15 has not been modelled in Viewpoint 7 or the location of the viewpoint in the Landscape Report Figure 1 is incorrect.

(b) The absence of labelled HSs on the Visual Simulations along with the provision of a scaled aerial photograph that shows both the viewpoint locations and the proposed SP layout, and the 'grouped analysis' of the viewpoints that relate to the HSs in the southern part of THRZ PPC in the Landscape Report, makes it difficult to be certain which HSs are seen in each view.

4.7 I have endeavoured to interpret the visual effects assessment in this regard relying on my field work and the plans provided. However, I would like to be able to confirm my comments if the requestor provides more clarification on these matters in their evidence.

## **5. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT, RELEVANT STATUTORY CONTEXT AND PPC PROVISIONS**

5.1 In my opinion, the Landscape Report, in combination with the other notified documents listed at paragraph 1.14(c) above, provide a thorough description of:

(a) the existing environment;

(b) the relevant statutory context; and

- (c) the PPC provisions, and the development anticipated by those provisions (excepting the discrepancy described below with respect to the walking/cycling trail adjacent Hogans Gully Road).

#### **THRZ PPC provisions**

- 5.2 The Conceptual Site Plan in Appendix 4 of the notified Clause 23 M Design Statement document (**Concept Plan**) illustrates a publicly accessible walking/bike trail along the southern portion of the site, effectively running parallel with Hogans Gully Road. This walking/bike trail connection is not shown on the notified THRZ PPC Structure Plan.
- 5.3 In my opinion, the inhospitable nature of Hogans Gully Road for pedestrians and cyclists means that this trail provides an appreciable landscape benefit as an alternate route. Further, this route offers a valuable off-road connection between the publicly accessible walkway/trail networks anticipated in Hogans Gully Resort Zone (**HGRZ**) to the southeast of the site, and the trail network further to the east of the site around Ayrburn, thereby contributing to the broader publicly accessible and largely off-road walkway and trail network associated with the Wakatipu Basin which is highly valued by the broader community and contributes significantly to the recreational landscape values of the area.
- 5.4 This matter was raised with the requestor's team during the October 2025 site visit, and it is understood that the walking/bike trail route adjacent Hogans Gully Road that is shown in the Concept Plan will be carried over to the Structure Plan. It would be helpful if the requestor was to confirm that and provide an updated Structure Plan.

## **6. MATTERS RAISED IN SUBMISSIONS**

- 6.1 It is noted that several of the local landowners have provided written support for THRZ PPC.

- 6.2 Landscape-related matters have been raised in the following submissions:
- (a) #2: Jane Ellen Todd & Trustees of Graeme Todd Family Trust, 10 Advance Terrace.
  - (b) #4: Derek and Anna Brown, 18 Advance Terrace.
  - (c) #13: James and Janene Draper, 110 Hogans Gully Road.
  - (d) #15: Simon Dan, 214 McDonnell Road.
  - (e) #16: Mark Williams, Queenstown Trail Trust.
  - (f) #20: Iris Weber and Dave Gibson, 63 Hogans Gully Road.
  - (g) Further Submission (**FS**) from Iris Weber and Dave Gibson (63 Hogans Gully Road) in support of #13 in relation to submission points 13.12 and 13.13 and building heights and building coverage.
- 6.3 Submissions #2 and #4 raise concern about the adverse visual effects of the proposed new **SGAA** and the proposed expansion of AA A4 in views from their properties and seek these specific changes proposed in the THRZ PPC are declined.<sup>13</sup>
- 6.4 Relying on my site visit to 10 and 18 Advance Terrace and the broader Advance Terrace and Cotter Avenue area (often described as the 'Arrowtown escarpment' area), and careful review of the Clause 23 documents (including Visual Simulations from this part of Arrowtown), I concur with the Landscape Report's analysis of the relevant viewpoints (i.e. 2, 3 and 4).
- 6.5 In my opinion, adverse visual effects arising from the SGAA and expanded AA A4 will rate as **low** ('minor'), taking into account:
- (a) the diminishing influence of distance (noting that 18 Advance Terrace is approximately 360m from the SGAA);

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<sup>13</sup> Submission #2 also raises the alternative option of relocating SG AA to adjacent to Area C.

- (b) the relative elevation of the Arrowtown escarpment viewers to the SGAA and AA A4<sup>14</sup>;
- (c) the proposed provisions to manage building height, coverage, colours, and materials;
- (d) the moderating influence of the golf resort context and broader, visually complex, and engaging outlook within which these development changes will be seen; and
- (e) the visual mitigation benefits that can be reasonably expected to accrue as a consequence of the proposed LAMA strategies associated with these AAs.

6.6 With respect to submission #13, it is my understanding based on the Brown & Co letter that the requestor has modified the PPC to address the landscape-related concerns raised by the submitter as follows:

- (a) Reducing the ground level reduced level (**RL**) and building heights by 1m on HSs 9, 10, 11 and 16.
- (b) Limiting the use of the new access road from Hogans Gully Road to residents and visitors accessing HSs 9, 10, 11 and 16, and clarifying that the new access from Hogans Gully Road shall not be used as a through road for vehicles from other parts of THRZ.

6.7 I have factored in these changes to the PPC provisions into my landscape effects comments which are discussed in more detail below.<sup>15</sup>

6.8 With respect to #15, the submitter does not oppose the proposed deletion of AA A7, or the proposed new HSs 6, 7, and 8 which are reasonably near their property at 214 McDonnell Road.

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<sup>14</sup> Noting that dwellings along the southern end of the escarpment are set at approximately RL 426m; SG AA top of roof is set at RL 406m; and AA A4 top of roof is set at RL 417.3m

<sup>15</sup> I note that the Brown & Co refers to the changes as agreed, and states that the Drapers have agreed to withdraw their submission on that basis. I have not yet seen confirmation in that respect from the Drapers.

- 6.9 The submitter is concerned that the alignment of the indicative public trail through THRZ PPC will compromise their privacy and seeks measures to address that potential effect. Relying on my site visit, it is my recommendation that additional planting is added to the THRZ PPC Structure Plan in the vicinity of 214 McDonnell Road to provide screening between the trail and dwelling. Assuming this change is made to the THRZ PPC provisions, adverse landscape-related effects for this property will be **low** ('minor').
- 6.10 With respect to #16, The Queenstown Trail Trust (**QTT**) appear to be seeking refinement to the alignment of the proposed walking/cycle trail in the south-eastern part of the plan change area. The requestor is encouraged to consider the layout recommended by QTT, given their wealth of experience in constructing and maintaining highly successful trails in the Basin.
- 6.11 QTT also request a trail link from THRZ PPC land westwards across Lot 4 DP 516022 and Lot 6 DP 392663 (the Boxer Hill Trust land) to connect with the trail network at Ayrburn. I agree with this recommendation, although note that the Boxer Hill land is outside the scope of the plan change area. In my opinion, the inclusion of the publicly accessible walking/bike trail along the southern portion of the site, effectively running parallel with Hogans Gully Road, that is indicated on the Concept Plan (and, on the THRZ PPC Structure Plan as recommended above), would assist in futureproofing a trail network link to Ayrburn.
- 6.12 Landscape-related matters raised in submission #20 relate to a request to increase the visual screening of the eight new HSs in the south-eastern portion of the plan change area and protect the existing poplars on the Boxer Hill Trust land to the west of the site. The same submitters' FS requests the curtailment of building height to protect rural character and amenity values and seeks the adjustment of HS building coverage to appropriately mitigate visual impacts.
- 6.13 As explained earlier, I have not visited 63 Hogans Gully Road (the home of the submitters) as such, but I have viewed it at close range, from the public road and the plan change land.
- 6.14 With respect to the submission #20 request in relation to the poplars, it is my understanding that this is outside the scope of the plan change. On this point, I

confirm that my visual effects analysis (and recommended amendments outlined in my discussion of landscape-related effects shortly) has taken into account the fact that this shelterbelt could be removed as a permitted activity (and is therefore not relied on for visual mitigation purposes).

6.15 I have considered the submitters' more general request in relation to increasing the visual screening of the HSs and their FS in my evaluation of landscape-related effects discussed shortly.

## 7. EVALUATION OF LANDSCAPE-RELATED EFFECTS

7.1 The Landscape Report concludes that the THRZ PPC will result in a development that is 'in character' with the existing environment and create **very low** adverse effects to the existing landscape and visual amenity values that underpin the existing landscape of THRZ<sup>16</sup>.

7.2 It is my understanding from an overall reading of the Landscape Report that the following key factors / strategies give rise to this effects outcome:

- (a) The moderating influence of the existing resort zoning of the site, which anticipates appreciable landscape change (albeit in a manner that appropriately responds to the landscape sensitivities of the site and its context).
- (b) The proposed approach of THRZ PPC to build on and integrate with the existing resort zone character to deliver an integrated development outcome.
- (c) The careful positioning, layout, and location-specific building controls (including height, coverage, colour, and materials) for the AAs and HSs to minimise earthworks effects, achieve an appropriate level of internal amenity, maintain the impression of predominant open space, and limit visibility of built form from outside the site (which is understood to assist in maintaining landscape character).

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<sup>16</sup> Refer Landscape Report, Section 6.0 Assessment of Landscape and Visual Amenity Effects and Section 7.0 Conclusions.

- (d) The sympathetic alignment of access roads and walking/cycling trails along with surface material and stormwater-related controls to minimise earthworks disturbance and ensure these elements are visually recessive.
  - (e) The incorporation of a comprehensive, cohesive, and coordinated LAMA and SPA strategy (including sympathetic mounding and a locally appropriate planting strategy) to assist the landscape (including visual) integration of built development (including roading) into the site and local landscape setting.
- 7.3 It is my understanding that the key landscape-related policy test for the PPC is the requirement for development to comprise an integrated golf resort development that maintains the landscape character and amenity values of THRZ and the surrounding environment (PDP THRZ Objective 47.2.1).
- 7.4 In my opinion, the eight HSs in the southern part of the site that sit within the Speargrass Flat valley catchment (i.e. HSs 9-16) introduce an appreciable landscape change to the landscape outcome anticipated by the PDP that has the potential to be contrary to the above landscape policy test and generate more than minor adverse landscape-related effects for the following reasons:
- (a) Under the PDP, this area of THRZ is anticipated as golf course which serves as an important landscape buffer between the developed (or 'built') part of the resort (in the Arrowtown catchment) and the more spacious rural landscape of the Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone (**WBRAZ**) land to the southwest (in the Speargrass Flat valley catchment). The introduction of eight HSs and associated roading (including a new entrance to Hogans Gully Road) has the potential to disrupt this impression and read as rural living development sprawl.
  - (b) Closely related to the above matter is the spatial separation of the eight new HSs from the golf course, which is at odds with the notion of resort zones as integrated developments. Put another way, it is reasonable to expect that the perceived connection of these HSs is likely to be equally, or perhaps even more strongly, related to the Speargrass Valley area rather than to the golf course resort itself, with this potential 'disconnect'

reinforced by the new access from Hogans Gully Road. In my view, the requestor's modified provisions in this regard (outlined in the Brown & Co letter) which limit the role of the new Hogans Gully Road access to providing access to HSs 9, 10, 11 and 16, and clarify that the new access from Hogans Gully Road shall not be used as a through road for vehicles from other parts of THRZ, serve to emphasise the distinction of the eight HSs as separate from the resort zone 'proper'.

- 7.5 I accept that the proposed LAMA and SPA strategy has the potential to accord with the zone purpose of achieving a predominance of open space in this part of THRZ. However, I consider that very close scrutiny of the collective planting strategy is necessary along with a very careful approach to the management of the visibility of built form on each HS, so that, at worst, only the upper portion of dwellings are seen in external views from Hogans Gully Road and Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road in particular.
- 7.6 In my opinion, such an outcome is necessary to ensure that the new development aligns with PDP THRZ Objective 47.2.1 and appropriately manages landscape-related effects. I acknowledge that the 'visibility test' that I consider appropriate in this part of the THRZ is more stringent than would typically be required in rural living areas in the Basin (i.e. the Wakatipu Basin Lifestyle Precinct (**WBLP**)). However, I consider that the landscape buffer role of this part of THRZ as 'breathing space' merits this along with the number of HSs proposed in this part of the site (which suggests the potential for cumulative adverse effects).
- 7.7 I consider that the management of visibility should be primarily achieved by sympathetic mounding (i.e. careful recontouring of the land to mimic the natural moraine landform patterning of the area) rather than mitigation planting, given the extensive reliance on lower species under THRZ PPC (which I consider to be appropriate in this golf course resort context).
- 7.8 For these reasons (and relying on my field work along with a detailed review of the application plans), I consider the following refinements are required to manage landscape-related effects and ensure the PPC aligns with PDP THRZ Objective 47.2.1. My recommendations have factored in the elevation of the relevant

vantage points relative to the proposed HSs and address the landscape-related matters raised in submissions described in section 6 above.

- (a) **HS 9:** The notified HS roof is RL 402.5m and the top of the LAMA is RL 401m. To better contain the HS in external views from the south, it is recommended that the higher part of the LAMA is extended westwards. I note the requestor and the Drapers (submitter #13) have agreed a reduction in the HS 9 ground level RL and building height of 1m<sup>17</sup> which will, in my view, achieve a similar outcome in terms of managing landscape-related effects.
- (b) **HS 10:** The notified HS roof is RL 405.5m. The top of the LAMA is RL 403m on the southern side of the HS and RL 400m on the western side of the HS. To better contain the HS in external views from the south, southwest, and western sides, it is recommended that the LAMA mounding height is increased to RL 403m on the south-western and western sides of the HS. I note the requestor and the Drapers (submitter #13) have agreed a reduction in the HS 10 ground level RL and building height of 1m<sup>18</sup>. I consider that this change in building height will assist in managing landscape-related effects in views from the south. However, I consider that increasing the LAMA height to RL 403m on the southwestern and western sides will still be required.
- (c) **HS 12:** The notified HS roof is RL 410.5m. It is recommended that to manage visibility from the southwest (Hogans Gully Road and Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road), either:
  - i. the LAMA mounding height is increased from RL 405m to RL 408m; or
  - ii. The HS ground level RL and building height is reduced by 3m.
- (d) **HS 15:** Despite the notified HS being over 75m from Hogans Gully Road, the roll of the land, combined with the anticipated roof height (RL 377.5m) and road alignment, means that it will read as dominant and

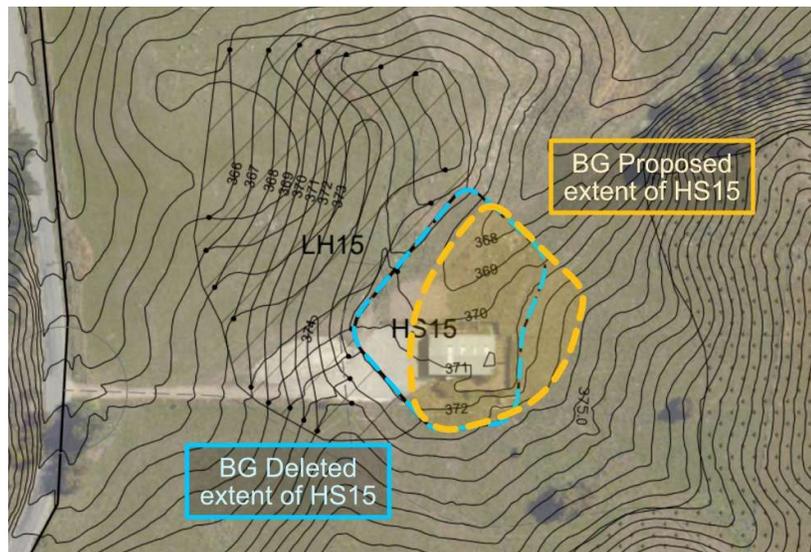
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<sup>17</sup> Refer Brown and Co letter.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

incongruous from Hogans Gully Road, within a setting in which dwellings are typically well integrated by landform and/or vegetation. It is recommended that:

- i. HS 15 is moved further back from the road as indicated in **Figure 1** below; and
- (e) the LAMA mounding height is increased from RL 375m to RL 376m to manage visual effects in views from Hogans Gully Road, or: the HS ground level RL and building height is reduced by 1m which, in my view, will achieve a similar outcome in terms of managing landscape-related effects.



**Figure 1:** Recommended changes to the extent of HS 15

- (f) **HS 16:** The notified HS roof is RL 416.5m and the top of the LAMA is RL 412.0m. It is recommended that the level of the HS 16 LAMA is increased by 2m, and the LAMA mounding extended westwards to provide a more comprehensive grounding and partial screening influence in external views from the south and southwest. I note the requestor and the Drapers (submitter #13) have agreed a reduction in the HS 16 ground level RL and building height of 1m<sup>19</sup>. I consider that this change in building height will assist in managing landscape-related effects in views

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

from the south. However, I consider that the LAMA mounding should be extended westwards to provide a more comprehensive grounding and partial screening influence in external views from the southwest.

- (g) It is recommended that the SPA strategy is reconfigured to include the three open, elevated, flatter parts of the southern portion of THRZ to achieve a coordinated and cohesive landscape strategy. Refer to **Error! Reference source not found.** below.



**Figure 2:** Proposed SPA expansion areas (identified in red outline).

- (h) It is recommended that a LAMA strategy is included along the eastern edge of the site, in the vicinity of deleted AA A7, to screen views from the proposed walking/bike trail into the Dan property at 214 McDonnell Road.

7.9 I note that the Brown & Co letter reduces the HS 11 ground level RL and building height by 1m. I consider that this change will be beneficial to the management of landscape-related effects for external views to the site.

7.10 I note that Council's traffic expert is recommending a change to the location of the new road access point on Hogans Gully Road.

7.11 A revised (new) access location may also require consequential changes to the alignment of the access network and associated earthworks and mitigation/enhancement planting strategy within the site. For these reasons, I would like to be able to confirm my comments with respect to the potential landscape effects associated with any revised access from Hogans Gully Road once those details become available.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

8.1 Subject to my review of annotated Visual Simulations with HSs labelled and a Viewpoint Location plan that shows the structure plan layout (on a scaled aerial base with contours) and any proposed changes to the new access on Hogans Gully Road, assuming the changes set out in paragraph 7.8 above are incorporated into the plan change, along with the addition of the walking/bike trail along the Hogans Gully Road frontage of the site mentioned earlier, I consider that the landscape-related effects of the plan change will be minor.

8.2 Importantly, assuming the incorporation of the amendments outlined above, the development outcome will maintain the landscape character and amenity values of THRZ and the surrounding environment (PDP THRZ Objective 47.2.1), making it appropriate from a landscape perspective.



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**Bridget Gilbert**

13 February 2026