

MIDDLETON FAMILY TRUST (SUBMISSION 2332)

EVIDENCE SUMMARY OF BEN ESPIE (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)

- 1 In relation to existing landscape character, I disagree with parts of the LCU4 section of Schedule 24.8 of the PDP. I do not consider that the western end of LCU4 is has significantly less capability to absorb additional development when compared to the eastern part of the unit. I set out reasons for that in my evidence. In her rebuttal evidence, Ms Gilbert agrees with opinions in part.
- 2 In relation to effects on landscape character, the requested relief will have effects in that naturalness and rural character will be reduced, but at a particularly localised scale only and in a way that ties in with its context. In this regard, the site is different to the majority of the Wakatipu Basin.
- 3 Ms Gilbert agrees with some of the mitigatory factors in relation to landscape character that I highlight but ultimately she concludes that there will be a high degree of landscape character effect (or urban design effect as she refers to it). Her finding is primarily related to the zoning or settlement pattern that will result from locating an area of suburban development at the far end of Tucker Beach Road; finding that the suburban area will not be sufficiently connected to other urban fabric via traffic routes (including pedestrian/cycle routes) and that the suburban area will not relate well enough to the context of Queenstown/Frankton as a town.
- 4 In relation to urban design principles, I agree that more connectivity and contextual integration can usually be achieved by creating a new suburban area that is immediately adjacent to an existing urban or suburban area. That way, a network of roads and pedestrian routes can knit the new area with the existing. In Queenstown/Frankton, this is particularly difficult due to topography and existing settlement patterns demonstrate this. The node of suburban development that would result from the relief sought by the submitter would be within 3.5km of the 5 Mile shopping centre via pedestrian/cycle trails and within 4.2km of SH8 via Tucker Beach Road. The suburban node would immediately adjoin ODP RRZ land that provides for development down to a minimum lot size of 4000m², which has been subdivided but only partially built on. Overall, I consider that the suburban area would be relatively well connected to Frankton via a logical settlement pattern, more so than Lake Hayes Estate / Shotover Country / Bridesdale, for example.
- 5 In relation to visual effects, the site sits in a relatively hidden corner of the Wakatipu Basin, however, some nearby areas gain views that will be affected. Effects on visual amenity as experienced from these areas will generally be of a low degree but will range up to a moderate degree for viewers in the western end of the ODP RRZ. I disagree with Ms Gilbert in that I find visual effects from Littles Road will be of a very low degree. The area of proposed zoning is only visible from a 450 metre stretch of road at distances of 1.2 kilometres. The visual amenity of a road user will be very largely unchanged.
- 6 I also disagree with Ms Gilbert regarding the degree of visual effect as experienced from the Tucker Beach Recreation Reserve and the western end of the Tucker Beach Road area. From these areas the entire ODP RRZ is visually prominent, more so than the proposed zoning since the RRZ is on north-facing sloping land. Much of this zoning is not yet built on. Development enabled by the submission would read as a logical and reasonably well mitigated extension to existing zoning and will be obviously distinct from the ONL.
- 7 In an overall sense, I consider that the relief sought has considerable justification on relation to landscape character and visual amenity issues.