

**BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN-LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**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** **LOCH LINNHE STATION**  
Submitter (31013)

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**EVIDENCE OF BENJAMIN ESPIE  
(LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)**

**29<sup>th</sup> MAY 2020**

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## 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 the parts of the Queenstown Lakes District south of the Kawarau River, and in relation to many resource consent applications and a number of plan changes in this part of the district.
- 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 PDP<sup>1</sup>.

## 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 31013 on the Proposed District Plan. In relation to this submission, I have been asked by the submitter to prepare evidence regarding the landscape and visual effects of the requested new areas of zoning at Wye Creek and Loch Linnhe.

## 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 The relief sought has been detailed in Mr. Vivian's evidence. Appendix 1 and 3 attached to my evidence define the spatial extent of the requested Rural Visitor Zones (**RVZ**).
- 3.2 It is agreed by Ms Gilbert and myself that the two identified areas can absorb some development. I consider that the degree of development that would be enabled by the provisions that are sought by the amended relief would be appropriately absorbed in terms of both landscape character and visual amenity and that the consent authority would retain discretion that would ensure this is the case.

## 4. AMENDED RELIEF

- 4.1 The relief sought has been amended since the time of the lodgement of the relevant submission as is detailed in the evidence Mr. Vivian. In relation to landscape matters, the most relevant changes to the relief sought are:

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<sup>1</sup> Environment Court decisions [2019] NZEnvC 160, 205 and 206

- Two areas of RVZ are sought. These are shown on Appendices 1 and 3 to this evidence.
  - The northern area (at Wye Creek) is 1.0 hectare in area and takes in rolling terrace land below State Highway 6 (**SH6**) that faces Lake Wakatipu. This area has been configured in such a way that the upper edge of the zone area sits below the land that is on the same elevation as SH6. The bulk of this RVZ area is identified as being of moderate-high landscape sensitivity in relation to the RVZ provisions, however a 1,750m<sup>2</sup> area that sits on flatter terrace topography is not. Specific provisions are proposed in relation to this 1ha RVZ area such that built form will be restricted to a total maximum footprint of 1800m<sup>2</sup>, that no built form will be visible from SH6 and that only one residential unit will be provided for. A breach of these provisions would result in non-complying status.
  - The southern area (at Loch Linnhe) is 8.6 hectares in area and takes in part of a rolling fan that slopes towards the lake. This area has been configured to avoid visual prominence from SH6 and it includes the existing homestead and farm base activities of Loch Linnhe Station, including two dwellings, yards and a number of farm buildings. 4ha of this RVZ area is identified as being of moderate-high landscape sensitivity in relation to the RVZ provisions, however a 3.6ha area that takes in the existing farm base activities is not. Specific provisions are proposed in relation to this area such that built form will be restricted to a total maximum footprint of 4,700m<sup>2</sup>. A breach of these provisions would result in non-complying status.

**4.2** As is set out in the submission, Loch Linnhe Station is a pastoral lease farming operation and the submitters are the lease holders. They cannot subdivide the property and have no intention of doing so. Rather, they seek two areas within the station within which they can develop one additional farm dwelling, farm buildings and associated activities including some visitor activities (farm stay accommodation or similar).

## 5. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

### EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 5.1** The entirety of Loch Linnhe Station (3,766ha) is within the Rural General Zone or Rural Zone and within an Outstanding Natural Landscape (**ONL**) as identified by both the Operative District Plan (**ODP**) and notified Proposed District Plan (**PDP**). The station generally takes in the west-facing slopes of the Hector Mountains that face the southern arm of Lake Wakatipu. These slopes are generally wild and rugged and are extensively grazed in the way that is common for high country stations of the district. They are broad and widely visually displayed to the west and have the sublime and majestic aesthetic qualities that are typical of the district's mountainous ONLs.
- 5.2** The vicinity of the northern requested RVZ at Wye Creek is part of a deposited fan landform associated with the mouth of Wye Creek. The northern half of this fan (i.e. north of Wye Creek itself) accommodates the existing Drift Bay rural living development that consists of 17 rural living lots (as shown on Appendix 2). The southern half of this fan is within Loch Linnhe Station and is open, improved but undeveloped farm land. This area has accommodated a gravel pit associated with road formation and a woodlot in the past. A large clump of mature conifers marks the southeastern part of the requested RVZ area. Apart from these trees, the requested RVZ area is generally open and vegetated in pasture grass, although it has some rocky outcrops and a gully housing regenerating natives near its southern edge. In general terms, the part of the fan south of Wye Creek has the character of an area of improved pasture land set in a natural and dramatic location.
- 5.3** The vicinity of the requested RVZ at Loch Linnhe is the farm base and home paddocks area of the station. Again, it is part of a large fan landform associated with a number of creeks draining the upper reaches of the Hector Mountains. The part of this fan that takes in the requested RVZ accommodates the existing homestead and existing farm base buildings and activities (in the northern part of the requested RVZ) and smaller, fenced, improved home paddocks (in the southern part of the requested RVZ).
- 5.4** In an overall sense, the two relevant vicinities represent small areas of flatter improved paddocks within a vast, rugged, mountainous station; the southern of the two areas being particularly modified by farm base activities.

## EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 5.5** Landscape effects are the effects that an activity may have on the landscape as a resource in its own right; effects on the patterns and processes that make up the landscape, rather than effects relating to views or visibility

### Wye Creek Area

- 5.6** The actual changes to landscape patterns on the ground that would be enabled by the requested RVZ in the in the Wye Creek area are a maximum total of 1800m<sup>2</sup> of built form within the marked zone area in a configuration that is not visible from SH6. In practice this is likely to take the form of a new, sizable homestead dwelling, a handful of utility farm buildings (most likely primarily equipment storage, rather than haybarn/woolshed buildings), and a small visitor facility (perhaps a farm stay house or a small number of cabin-like buildings). Any proposed built form outside of the 1,750m<sup>2</sup> area that is not identified as being of moderate-high landscape sensitivity would require discretionary activity resource consent.
- 5.7** Given the configuration of the requested Wye Creek RVZ and the restrictions that the proposed provisions place on it, I envisage that development is most likely to take the form of a cluster of perhaps 5 buildings as described above in a roughly north-south running band, situated down close to the western side of the zone area. The buildings are likely to be served by an access driveway that curves down from the existing road access point, and ultimately, they are likely to be treed on their southern and eastern sides. In this regard, the ultimate result will be somewhat similar to the homestead areas of Halfway Bay Station of Cecil Peak Station on the opposite side of the southern arm of the lake. Traditionally, the homestead clusters of the Lake Wakatipu stations are situated on fan or valley-floor landforms adjacent to watercourses.
- 5.8** In terms of the character of the landscape, the results of the requested RVZ will be a further element of human modification in a landscape that is, in an overall sense, dramatic and natural. In this regard, the requested RVZ will reduce natural character. However, it will do so in a way that accords with the District's traditional rural settlement patterns; a small cluster of buildings situated on a fan landform associated with a large farming station. This cluster will only be the second (the other being the existing Loch Linnhe homestead cluster) on the eastern side of the

southern arm of the lake. The cluster that will result from the requested RVZ will be in an inconspicuous, contained location.

- 5.9** In an overall sense, I consider that natural character will be slightly reduced by the introduction of new human elements, however the result will accord with traditional rural patterns, and (as will be discussed in relation to visual effects) the result will be inconspicuous.

Loch Linnhe Area

- 5.10** The changes to the landscape patterns on the ground that would be enabled by the requested RVZ in the in the Loch Linnhe area would be more extensive but less dense. A total of 4700m<sup>2</sup> of built form would be enabled over a 8.6 hectare area. Existing built form within this area totals approximately 1850m<sup>2</sup>, hence a maximum of 2850m<sup>2</sup> of additional built form would be enabled. What the submitters envisage here is utilitarian farm base activities (sheds, barns, yards, workers and managers' residences, etc; much of which is already existing) in the northern part of the RVZ (which is not identified as being of high or moderate-high landscape sensitivity), and farm based, low-intensity tourism activities in the southern part of the RVZ (which is identified as being of moderate-high landscape sensitivity). The tourism activities are envisaged to be perhaps a number of cabins or villas with the possibility of a central common room / function facility. The built form restriction means that, at a maximum, development is likely to consist of perhaps 2000m<sup>2</sup> of farming activity (including currently existing buildings) and 2700m<sup>2</sup> of visitor activity.
- 5.11** The fan landform on which the requested RVZ is located slopes variably down to the west. The RVZ area avoids the highest and lowest parts of this fan landform (which are the most visually displayed parts) and extends potential development roughly along a line of the same elevation as the existing farm base activities. Given the restriction on total building footprint, I consider that development within the 8.6 hectare area is likely to take the form of a loose scattering or a number of small clusters, with utilitarian activities concentrated in the northern part of the RVZ area. In any event, the relevant fan landform will accommodate an extension of built form to the south of the existing homestead cluster.
- 5.12** Again, it is relevant that the site of the requested RVZ is on a fan landform associated with watercourses that drain the mountain slopes to the lake, and that this fan landform already accommodates a homestead cluster.

- 5.13** In terms of the character of the landscape, the results of the requested RVZ will intensify or extend an existing area of human modification to the landscape. In this instance, the existing modification is a long-established homestead and farm base cluster associated with a vast high-country station. The area into which activity will be extended takes the form of improved home paddocks associated with the homestead cluster. Therefore, while adding further human activity will be a reduction to natural character in an overall sense, I consider that this effect is considerably mitigated in this instance due to the specific location in which the activities will occur (in an improved home paddocks area that includes an existing long-established farm base) and by the restrictions on the activities enabled (a low-density scattering or clustering of buildings over a defined area). Again, the location of these activities is one that accords with historic rural settlement patterns of the district (as is evidenced by the existing homestead); that clusters of built form associated with the large stations are traditionally situated on fans adjacent to watercourses. The southern half of this proposed RVZ area currently does not accommodate buildings and sits to the south of an unnamed creek gully. This area is identified as being of moderate-high landscape sensitivity and hence, any built activities within this area will require discretionary activity resource consent.
- 5.14** Again, I consider that the above factors mitigate potential effects on landscape character. I also consider that this location has more capacity to absorb change than the northern location and hence it is appropriate that more development is enabled here.

## **6. VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY**

### **WYE CREEK AREA**

- 6.1** The requested RVZ is located on the southern part of the relevant fan landform. The topography of this fan landform is such that the requested RVZ cannot be seen from the existing Drift Bay rural living area. A proposed provision will mean that development in the RVZ will not be visible from SH6. The context of the area of proposed RVZ is shown on Appendix 2.
- 6.2** Observers that have the potential to have their views or visual amenity affected by the requested RVZ are users of the lake surface and users of public land on the upper western faces of the Remarkables and Hector Mountains that is accessed via Wye Creek Gully.



- 6.3** Wye Creek itself descends from the southern end of the Remarkables via a deeply incised gully. The northern half of this gully accommodates public access up to DOC land that takes in the upper parts of the Hectors and the Remarkables. Within this DOC land on the south side of Wye Creek is a popular rock-climbing area. The proposed provision that requires buildings to not be visible from SH6 will effectively mean that buildings cannot be seen from the public land up Wye Creek gully except for particularly high parts of the public land, such as the rock-climbing areas. From these elevated public viewpoints, views are vast and broad and take in the surface of the southern arm of Lake Wakatipu, backed by Cecil Peak, the Bayonet Peaks and the Eyre Mountains extending away to the south. Adjacent to the lake edge, the Wye Creek fan landform can be seen as a mid-ground element in the views; the viewer generally being high above SH6. SH6 itself can be seen bisecting the fan and the existing Drift Bay rural living area is entirely displayed. The eastern edge of the requested RVZ is potentially visible in these views. In effect, I consider that a driveway and parts of the roofs of a cluster of buildings may be visible. The bulk of the buildings will be screened by topography, being down the bank from the level of SH6. Additionally, the buildings may include trees on their eastern side to reduce road noise, which would most likely render them invisible. In any event, I consider that new buildings enabled by the requested RVZ will be, at most, a peripherally visible element of the mid-ground and will be much less visible than the buildings of the existing Drift Bay rural living area. They will be a very minor element in the overall composition of views which are very broad and expansive, being overwhelmingly dominated by the lake and mountains. I consider that the effect on the visual amenity of a user of these elevated public areas will be of a negligible degree.
- 6.4** Users of the surface of Lake Wakatipu, within the vicinity of Wye Creek, would primarily consist of recreational boat users. In terms of recreational traffic, this is not a well-used part of Lake Wakatipu.
- 6.5** The mouth of Wye Creek is an area that is sometimes used by the public for fishing, although public access to it is difficult. The area that is accessible at all and that is used for fishing is on the north side of Wye Creek itself and allows no visibility to the requested RVZ.
- 6.6** The requested RVZ area does not descend entirely to the lower (western) edge of the Loch Linnhe land, where this meets the public lakeside strip, it is set back by at least 20 metres. Lake users that are close to the shore will gain a plain view of development within the requested RVZ.

As a lake user moves further from the shore, views will become more distant but a clear line of sight will still be available. In this sense, a considerable area of lake surface is affected. Lake users that are more than 400 metres from the water's edge adjacent to the requested RVZ will also see the Drift Bay rural living area as well as the requested zone. These views are illustrated by the photographs of Appendix 5 to this evidence.

- 6.7** For lake users that visit this part of the lake, development enabled by the requested RVZ will appear as an additional lakeside cluster of buildings, somewhat akin to the homestead clusters of Halfway Bay and Cecil Peak Stations. As discussed, this cluster will sit on a fan landform adjacent to a watercourse (Wye Creek) and also adjacent to the existing rural living development. In this sense, I consider that the built development will not appear as unexpected as it would in other lakeside locations; there will be some visual logic to it and it will accord with traditional patterns. For the vast majority of the southern arm of the lake, rugged, steep, vegetated slopes continue right to the water's edge. These parts of the lake edge will remain as the aesthetically wilder, dominant image of the lake shore. In this particular location, the existing built development that sits on the Wye Creek fan will be added to, in the form of an additional cluster. Given the existing development in this vicinity and the accordance of the requested RVZ with traditional patterns, I do not consider that the essential qualities that make this landscape an ONL will be degraded by buildings provided for by the requested situation. The buildings will cumulatively add to the visual modification and clutter of the specific vicinity of the Wye Creek fan but will be dwarfed by the landscape as a whole and will not appear entirely unusual or unexpected.

## **LOCH LINNHE AREA**

- 6.8** Observers that have the potential to have their views or visual amenity affected by the southern area of requested RVZ are:
- Users of the surface of Lake Wakatipu;
  - Users of part of SH6;
  - Observers in Kingston;
  - Observers on the public land on the west side of the lake.

Lake Users

- 6.9** I have not visited the surface of the lake for the purpose of assessing the visual effects of the southern requested RVZ area. Users of the surface of Lake Wakatipu, within the vicinity of Loch Linnhe, would primarily consist of recreational boat users who have launched at Kingston. Kingston is a popular holiday location at times of the year. The context of the requested RVZ is shown on Appendix 4.
- 6.10** When experienced from the narrow gravel beach at the water's edge the requested RVZ area is not visible. The RVZ sits on the upper part of the fan landform. The lower part (which will remain RZ) is somewhat proud in terms of topography and presents a rounded escarpment falling to the road and lake, which serves to considerably screen much of the requested RVZ from the west. A user on the surface of Lake Wakatipu will need to be some distance from the shoreline to be able to gain good visibility of the requested RVZ. As well as sloping to the west, the fan landform slopes from the south down to the north, with the existing homestead area being on the lower topography. Therefore, a viewer to the south or southwest of the site will gain relatively little visibility of it, the slightly higher land to the south and west of the requested RVZ providing topographical screening.
- 6.11** The existing homestead and associated buildings, being on the lower part of the requested RVZ area, are displayed to a considerable area of lake surface. In approximate terms, lake surface observers that are on the western half of the southern arm are likely to have a line of sight to some development within the requested RVZ. The rugged mountain bluff of the Devil's Staircase provides screening such that a lake surface observer to the north of the Devil's Staircase must be close to the western shore to gain any potential visibility. Lake users that are to the north of Halfway Bay will not gain any visibility of the requested RVZ. Some of the lake views towards the requested zone area are distant. From near Kingston, a lake user is approximately 7.5 kilometres from the requested RVZ. Near Halfway Bay, a lake user is more than 9 kilometres away.
- 6.12** When views are available from the lake surface locations described above, a lake viewer will see the requested RVZ as a horizontal band stretching to the right of the existing homestead cluster of built form. Parts of the requested RVZ area are likely to be screened by the lower parts of the fan landform. The horizontal band of the requested RVZ area will not be filled with buildings. The

northern (left) part of the requested RVZ is likely to appear much as it does now; a farm base area with clustered utilitarian buildings, although some additional buildings may appear. The southern (right) part of the requested RVZ is likely to accommodate a scattering or clustering of buildings for some form of visitor accommodation (up to 2850m<sup>2</sup> total maximum footprint, excluding the existing farm base buildings). From the distances involved, the use of the buildings is likely to be indiscernible and they will appear perhaps as groups of small farm dwellings or other farm buildings. The area of the requested RVZ will appear more busy and visually cluttered but not densely so; most of the zone area will be greenspace. In relation to this part of the RVZ area that lies to the south of the creek gully beside the existing farm base buildings, discretionary resource consents will be required for development. The QLDC will have the ability to exercise discretion in relation to landscape treatment and all aspects of built development.

- 6.13** Overall, I consider that the requested RVZ area will visually read as a sizable cluster of buildings associated with a farm base. As discussed in relation to the northern area, the current visual amenity experienced from the lake will change in that particular views to the site will be less characterised by nature and open space than they currently are. However, again, I consider that the new activities enabled by the requested situation will have a visual logic to them in that they are located on a fan landform and, in this case, will take the form of an extension to an existing farm base area. The spatial configuration of the requested RVZ is such that areas of landform that are particularly visually displayed are avoided. While I consider that views from the lake will be affected, I consider that a number of factors considerably mitigate the degree of effect and the overall amenity that is enjoyed by lake users will not be inappropriately reduced.

#### SH6 users

- 6.14** In a theoretical sense (i.e. based on an analysis of topography alone), there is visibility of the requested RVZ area from the stretches of SH6 shown on Appendix 4. In reality, in views from the southern stretch of SH6 shown on Appendix 4, roadside trees and minor topographical elements very often entirely screen views towards the relevant area.
- 6.15** The composition of views from the relevant parts of SH6 are overwhelmingly dominated by the lake surface and the slopes of Mount Dick on the western side of the lake. The existing farm base buildings within the requested RVZ are readily visible to an observer that looks for them but are otherwise quite likely to go unnoticed by the majority of SH6 users. Southbound travellers

have a better view into the relevant area as they travel the stretches of road to the south of the Devil's Staircase, but to the north of the existing homestead. The requested RVZ area reads as relatively verdant pasture on the foothill fan. The existing buildings are visible but, as mentioned, not in a central position of views and hence not conspicuous. A spread of additional buildings to the south of the existing ones would be able to be seen from these northern stretches of road. A scattering or loose clustering of additional buildings would spread to the south by potentially some 300 metres such that the home paddocks area would become more visually busy. I consider that, from these northern viewpoints, the requested RVZ comprises such a small and unobtrusive part of view composition that the extension of built form will have a negligible to slight degree of effect on views and visual amenity as experienced by a road user.

- 6.16** In views from the southern stretch of SH6 (which will generally be had by a northbound traveller), views are more difficult and more distant (between 3.8 and 7.5 kilometres). While a line of sight is sometimes available, I consider that a SH6 user will be very unlikely to notice any significant visual change as a result of the requested situation.

Observers in Kingston

- 6.17** A potential line of sight to the requested RVZ area exists from the numerous parts of Kingston township. These views are at distances of at least 7.6 kilometres. In some light conditions buildings within the requested RVZ may be visible but would effectively be seen as dots or specks. An observer is likely to recognise these as buildings but more detail than that would be indiscernible. The existing buildings of the homestead cluster can sometimes be seen in this way. I consider that additional buildings as provided for by the requested situation are very likely to go unnoticed and, in any event, would have no significant effect on the quality of views.

Observers on the public land on the west side of the lake

- 6.18** The eastern faces of Mount Dick and A32 (the peak directly south of Mount Dick which can be seen on Appendix 4) are public land administered by DOC. These are steep, rocky mountain slopes made up of a number of small watercourse catchments and gullies. One track ascends from south of Kingston to near the peak of A32. I understand that these slopes are occasionally used by hunters and possibly particularly intrepid trampers and recreationalists. From these slopes views are available of most of the southern arm of Lake Wakatipu and of the Hector

Mountains. The existing homestead area and the fan on which it sits are visible, as the requested RVZ would be. The additional buildings that would be enabled would be visible, spreading to the south of the existing ones. Given the breadth and scale of views available, the relative size of the requested RVZ in relation to the overall composition of views, and the existence of the current homestead cluster, I do not consider that the visual experience of a user of these mountain slopes would be adversely affected by the requested situation.

## **7. MS GILBERT'S EVIDENCE**

**7.1** Ms Gilbert's evidence discusses the relief sought by Submission 31013. Obviously, her assessment and comments do not take account of the amendments to the relief that are described in paragraph 4.1 above. Most significantly, a discretionary resource consenting regime is to largely apply to the proposed RVZs and they have been reduced in size.

**7.2** In relation to the relief sought by the original submission, Ms Gilbert concludes that:

*"both areas of proposed RVZ have the ability to successfully absorb a modest level of rural visitor development subject to the implementation of some specific controls (i.e. RD or D status or a structure plan approach discussed shortly)"<sup>2</sup>.*

**7.3** Ms Gilbert sets out that opportunities existing in relation to both proposed areas of RVZ and these relate to the potential to remove exotic vegetation and to create native restoration. Ms Gilbert also identifies the potential to create public lake access at the northern proposed RVZ as an opportunity. Since the property is a pastoral lease and no subdivision would be undertaken, I understand that this opportunity may not be realistic. I also note that the corridor of Wye Creek (approximately 350m to the north of the northern proposed RVZ area) provides public access between SH6 and the public lake edge.

**7.4** The constraints that Ms Gilbert identifies relate to the potential visibility of the both proposed RVZ areas from the lake and the western shores of the lake, and to potential visibility of the southern area of RVZ from SH6. When she sets out her constraints, Ms Gilbert notes that she is assuming

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<sup>2</sup> Statement of Evidence of Bridget Mary Gilbert – Landscape Architecture – Rural Visitor Zone – Rezoning – 18 March 2020, paragraph 6.12.

"no external appearance controls and taking into account the proposed maximum built footprint"<sup>3</sup>. Ms Gilbert goes on to recommend a restricted discretionary or discretionary status for buildings, or a structure plan approach, or some blend of these two methods.

**7.5** Ms Gilbert also recommends some more detailed analysis is done in the form of scaled aerial photographs, detailed contour mapping, panoramic photographs from the lake, ZTV<sup>4</sup> analysis and commentary on the attributes of the existing landscape and how these will be maintained<sup>5</sup>.

**7.6** Scaled aerial photographs and panoramic photographs from the lake are provided by the appendices to this evidence. Detailed contour mapping and ZTV analysis are not provided. This evidence and the supporting work were undertaken during April and early May 2020, when New Zealand was at Alert Level 3 and 4 in relation to the Covid-19 virus. Consequently, limited site work was possible.

**7.7** Regarding the attributes that contribute to the relevant landscape being an ONL, I have discussed these in Section 5 of this evidence. In essence, I consider that the west-facing slopes of the Hector Mountains, the east-facing slopes of Mount Dick and the Bayonet Peaks and the southern arm of Lake Wakatipu all combine to form a vast mountains-and-lake landscape that is wild and rugged in character and has the sublime and majestic aesthetic qualities that are typical of the district's mountainous ONLs. In summary, the attributes of this ONL are:

- its vastness and openness;
- its generally unmodified character when assessed as a whole, i.e. considerably intact natural biophysical / ecosystem patterns and processes, geomorphological forms and processes and the fact that the vast majority of the lake margins are unoccupied;
- its dramatic and sublime aesthetic characteristics, particularly very long views across the lake surface and very broad views of rugged mountain faces, peaks and skylines;
- the legibility of Lake Wakatipu as a naturally formed lake, being immediately recognisable as such; and

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, paragraph 6.15.

<sup>4</sup> Zone of Theoretical Visibility.

<sup>5</sup> Statement of Evidence of Bridget Mary Gilbert – Landscape Architecture – Rural Visitor Zone – Rezoning – 18 March 2020, paragraph 6.18.

- constantly changing and dramatic transient values (largely aesthetic) associated with the seasons, changing light throughout the day, atmospheric and climatic conditions.

**7.8** Also in Section 5 of this evidence, I discuss the effects of the amended relief on the ONL in which the areas of zoning will sit. In summary, I consider that activities enabled by the proposed areas of RVZ will sit comfortably with existing landscape character and have very little influence on it. They will appear as small, inconspicuous instances of built development, adjacent to other development and located and configured so as to appear logical and expected in relation to existing patterns.

**7.9** I agree with Ms Gilbert that a restricted discretionary or discretionary status for built development gives considerably more certainty in relation to outcomes and effects. This is particularly the case in relation to full discretionary status, which is now proposed in the identified moderate-high landscape sensitivity areas which cover much of the requested zone areas (the exceptions being the area of existing built farm base activities at Loch Linnhe and a small flat terrace at Wye Creek). This status will allow the consent authority to ensure consented development fully upholds the relevant Objectives and Policies. Development will be able to be restricted (or refused consent) as required, in order to achieve this. The appropriate removal/management of existing vegetation and appropriate revegetation will be able to be ensured.

**7.10** Overall, I consider that there is very largely agreement between myself and Ms Gilbert and that the amended relief alleviates her concerns.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

**8.1** The amended relief that is sought would enable two nodes of development that would consist of farm activities and farm-associated tourism activity, much of which would require discretionary activity resource consent. The station is held by pastoral lease and no tenure review process is in motion, nor is one intended.

**8.2** The clusters of activity would be discrete and would be located on small watercourse fans that accommodate improved pasture. Such fans are traditional locations for homestead farm base



activities for stations that abut Lake Wakatipu's edge (indeed the southern of the two locations already accommodates a farm base). As such, I consider that there is considerable logic in relation to the requested situation in terms of landscape character. I consider that the attributes that contribute to the ONL status of the landscape within which the proposed areas of zoning sit, will not be materially compromised.

**8.3** In relation to visual effects, the northern requested RVZ area will only have any significant effects on users of a certain part of the lake surface. Lake users will visually experience more human modification of the landscape than currently but this modification will appear in a logical location adjacent to other development on the same small fan (the Drift Bay rural living area) and will be dwarfed by the surrounding mountain slopes and lake surface.

**8.4** The southern requested RVZ area will be visible from the lake and also some terrestrial viewpoints. In visual terms, enabled development will take the form of the expansion of an existing farm base area. A lake viewer must be reasonably distant in order to get a view of the relevant area. Again, the expanded cluster will have visual logic in that it will be on a modified and improved fan landform which is distinct from the rugged mountain slopes. Again, I do not consider that visual amenity will be significantly reduced. A SH6 user can gain some views to the southern requested RVZ area as they travel between the Devil's Staircase and Kingston. Views from this stretch of highway are overwhelmingly dominated by the lake surface and the surrounding mountains and development that would result from the requested RVZ would be inconspicuous and would only slightly detract from the quality of current views.

## **ATTACHED APPENDICES**

- 1 A PLAN OF THE NORTHERN REQUESTED RVZ AREA.
- 2 THE CONTEXT OF THE NORTHERN REQUESTED RVZ AREA.
- 3 A PLAN OF THE SOUTHERN REQUESTED RVZ AREA.
- 4 THE CONTEXT OF THE SOUTHERN REQUESTED RVZ AREA.
- 5 PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE WYE CREEK AREA

**Ben Espie**  
**vivian+espie**  
**29<sup>th</sup> May 2020**



REF: 1055-01  
DATE: 27.05.2020  
SCALE: 1:1000 @ A3

**SUBMISSION 31013 - ESPIE EVIDENCE - APPENDIX 1:**  
**PLAN OF THE NORTHERN REQUESTED RVZ AREA**  
Brown hatch indicates an area of Moderate-High Landscape Sensitivity.



**SUBMISSION 31013 – ESPIE EVIDENCE – APPENDIX 2: THE CONTEXT OF THE NORTHERN REQUESTED RVZ AREA**



REF: 1055-01  
DATE: 27.05.2020  
SCALE: 1:1000 @ A3

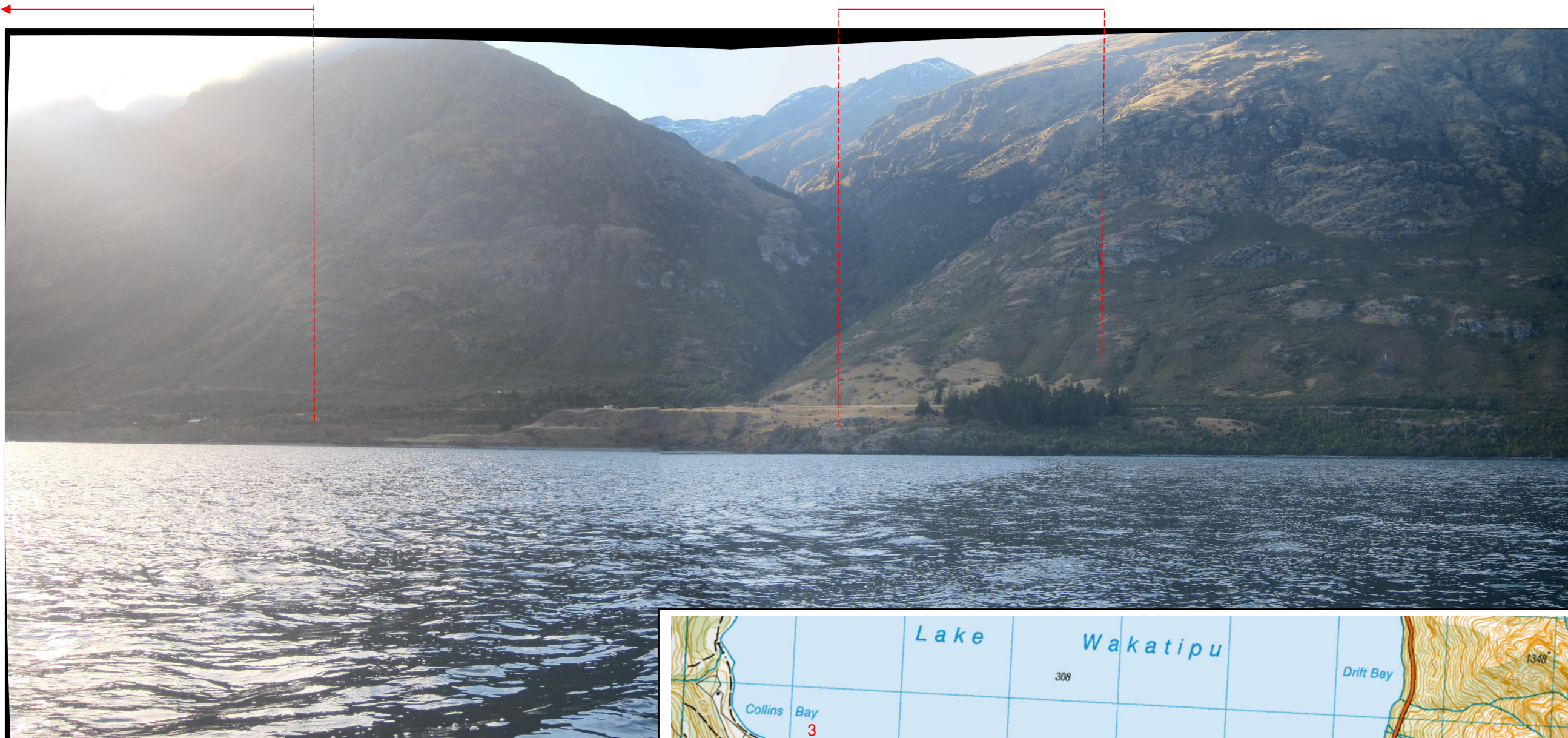
**SUBMISSION 31013 - ESPIE EVIDENCE - APPENDIX 3:**  
**PLAN OF THE SOUTHERN REQUESTED RVZ AREA**  
Brown hatch indicates an area of Moderate-High Landscape Sensitivity.



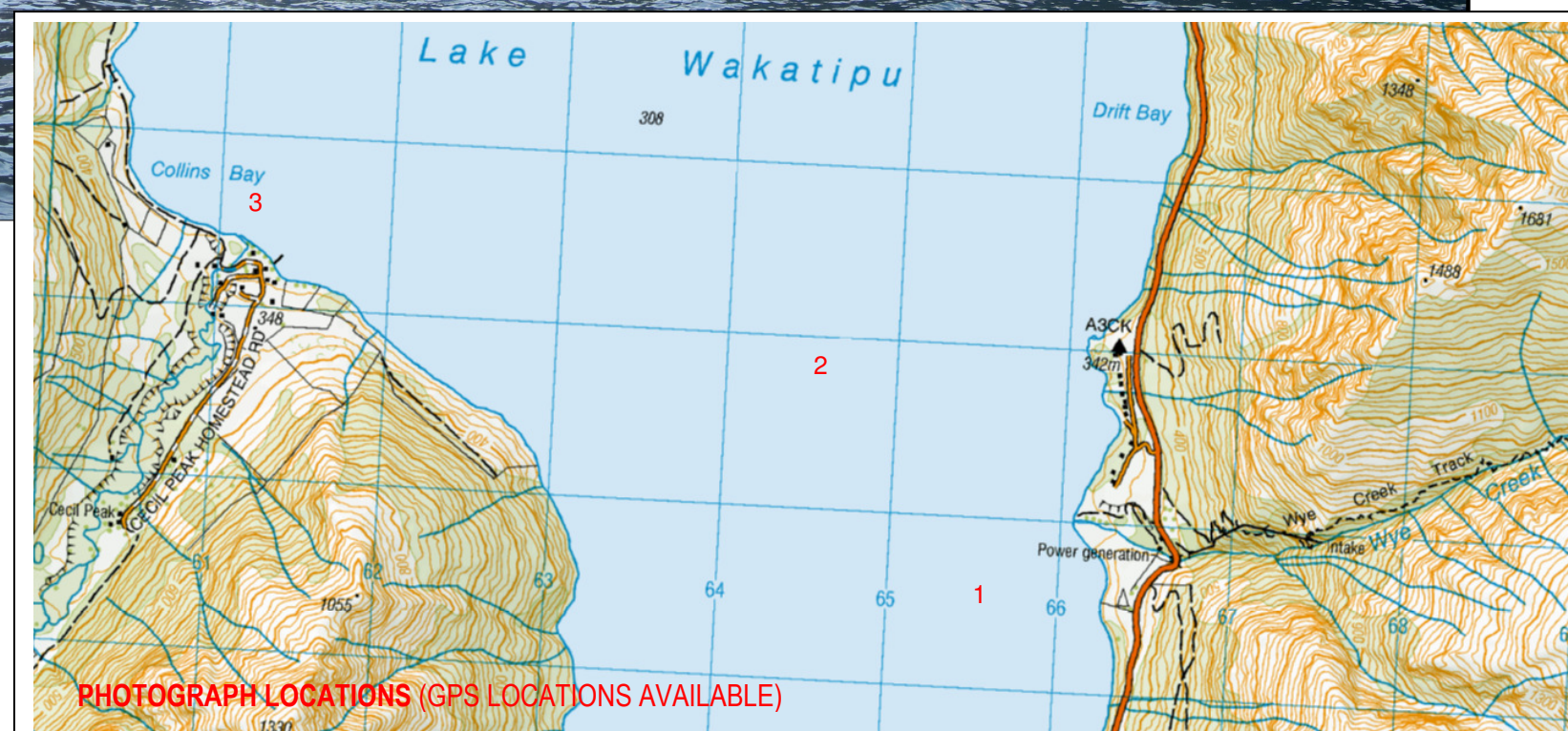
**SUBMISSION 31013 – ESPIE EVIDENCE – APPENDIX 4: THE CONTEXT OF THE SOUTHERN REQUESTED RVZ AREA**  
The pink lines indicate stretches of SH6 from which there is an intermittent line of sight to the proposed southern RVZ area.

Extent of Drift Bay rural living area

Extent of proposed RVZ area



Photograph 1.

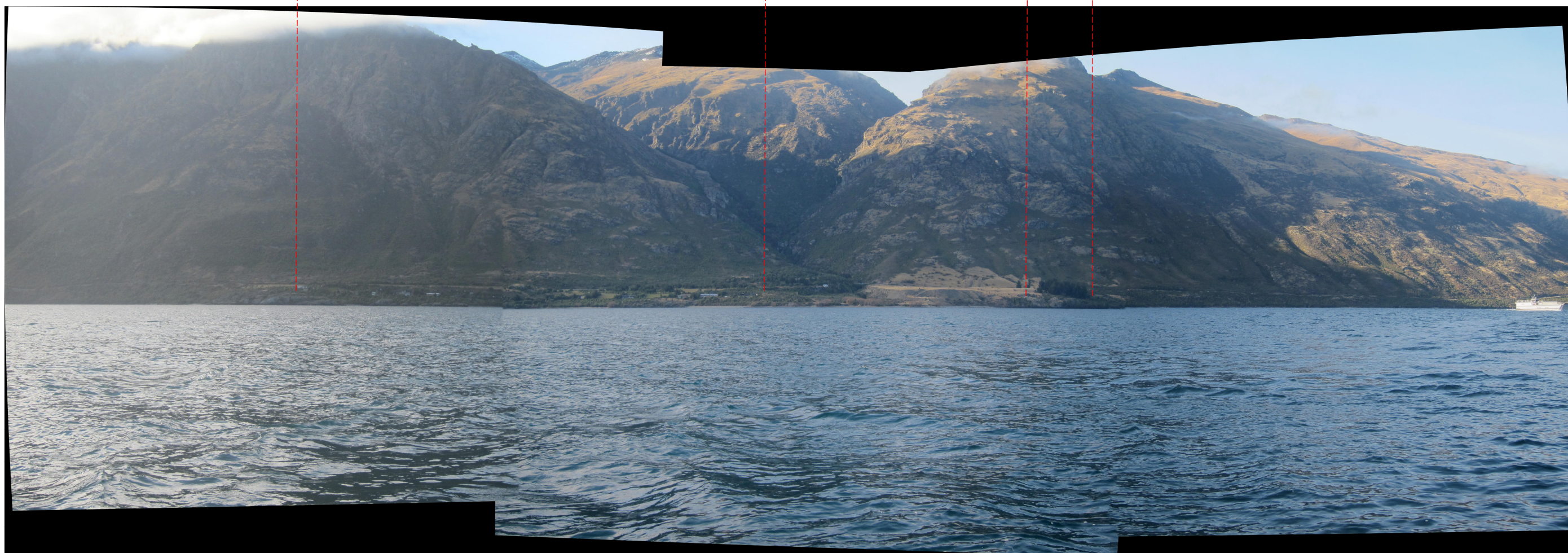


**SUBMISSION 31013 – ESPIE EVIDENCE – APPENDIX 5: PHOTOGRAPHS**

All photographs were taken with a fixed focal length of 50mm. Photographs are intended to illustrate points made in this evidence. If this sheet is printed at A3 size, the photographs are not at full size so as to replicate the full-scale field of view as taken in by the human eye.

Extent of Drift Bay rural living area

Extent of proposed RVZ area

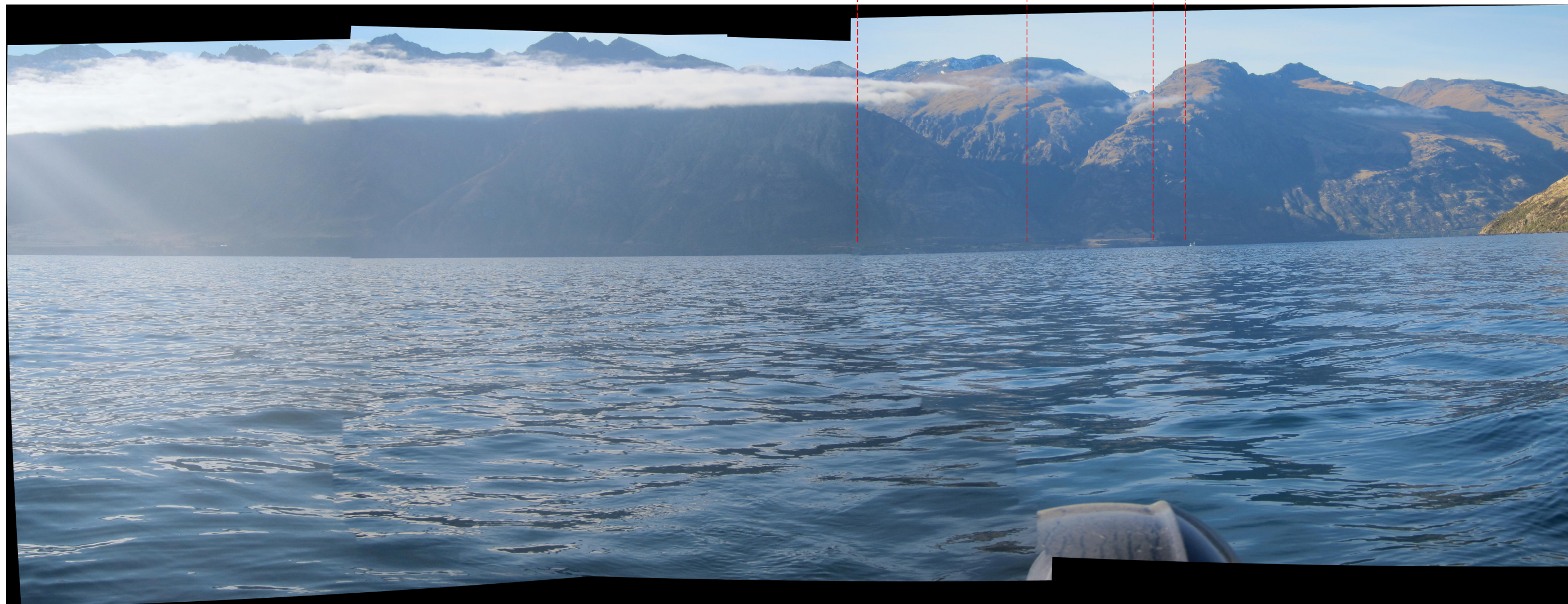


Photograph 2.



Extent of Drift Bay rural living area

Extent of proposed RVZ area



Photograph 3.