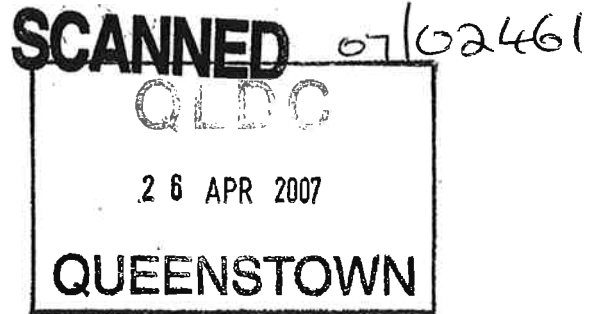R . A . Skidmore
urban design ltd

18 April 2007

Queenstown Lakes District Council
Private Bag 50072
QUEENSTOWN

<u>Attention: Alyson Schuler</u>

Dear Alyson

RE: FRANKTON FLATS PLAN CHANGE – URBAN DESIGN CONSIDERATION

Further to our meeting in Queenstown the other week, I write to set out the key urban design matters that should be considered when progressing the Frankton Flats plan change.

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol has been prepared by the Ministry for the Environment in conjunction with an Urban Design Advisory Group to provide a platform to make New Zealand towns and cities more successful through quality urban design. It forms part of the Government's Sustainable Development Programme of Action and Urban Affairs portfolio. The vision for the Protocol is:

Making New Zealand towns and cities more successful through quality urban design.

The Urban Design Protocol (of which RA Skidmore Urban Design Ltd, and the Queenstown Lakes District Council are signatories) provides a useful platform for considering urban design matters when creating frameworks for the development and management of urban environments. The Protocol identifies seven essential design qualities that create quality urban design – the seven C's. These are: context; character; choice; connections; creativity; custodianship and collaboration. These design qualities are based on sound urban design principles that are recognised and demonstrated throughout the world. A summary of the seven C's as set out in the Protocol is contained in Attachment 1.

In order to take account and address the seven C's at Frankton Flats, the following matters should be addressed.

Understanding and responding to context

(Relates to Context of Urban Design Protocol)

Successful places generally have a strong relationship to their surrounding context (both immediate and broad) and function as part of a wider whole, rather than in isolation. At Frankton there are a number of challenges to achieving good integration between urban areas. In particular the airfield and State Highway act as distinctive edges that perform a severing function. Key contextual features that should be considered include the following:

- The geographical setting – The Frankton Flats form a series of terraces that step down to the Kawarau River to the east and southeast and to Lake Wakatipu to the southwest. Spectacular landforms rise around the terrace to visually contain the lowlands. In particular, the iconic mountain range of the Remarkables to the south provides a spectacular natural feature that defines the area's context;

- The location of the Frankton-Ladies Mile Highway (State Highway 6) that provides the primary entrance to Queenstown;

- The location of Queenstown Airport and its runways;

- The proposed location of an arterial link from State Highway 6 to the east of the airport runway connecting with Remarkables Park;

- The distribution of commercial and residential development both in the immediate Frankton and wider Queenstown context. In particular, the location of the existing commercial centre at the corner of Frankton Road and Kawarau Road, the location and possible future distribution of activities at Remarkables Park and further afield at Jacks Point. Consideration of the relationship of the area to the established settlements of Queenstown and Arrowtown is also important;

- The location and configuration of the industrial area at Glenda Drive;

- The location and configuration of recreational activities at the Queenstown Events Centre.

Activity Mix

(Relates to Context, Choice, Character and Creativity of Urban Design Protocol)

The configuration and mix of activities in a settlement play an important part in determining its functionality, form and character. Over the past 20 years there has been a trend away from segregated activity planning of settlements (which prevailed in post-war planning) to the promotion of mixed-use centres. The co-location of compatible uses has a range of benefits including:

- Reducing the length and number of potential vehicle trips;

- Efficiency of use of land resource;

- Providing convenience and amenity for those using and living in settlements;

- Providing a setting for different members of the community to meet, do business, live and be entertained;

- Improving the perceived and actual safety of settlements by generating activity at different times throughout the day and evening and at different times of the week;

- Improving the economic viability of centres by different business and residential types providing mutual support and creating a high amenity and vibrant settings that attract new economy type businesses.

Providing for diversity and adaptability means that places can adapt to changing community needs. In order to achieve an integrated and mixed settlement, a diversity of housing types should be provided. Mechanisms for achieving housing diversity and affordability, whilst ensuring amenity and relevance to the local context should be explored.

At Frankton it is important to understand the demand for different land uses and how these relate to the urban pattern in the wider contex.

In order for different uses to support each other in the creation of a vibrant community focal point and economically viable business environment they need to achieve a critical mass and intensity. In developing appropriate District Plan provisions it is also important to pay careful consideration to the framework for providing for the location and configuration of different uses and the resulting building forms to avoid reverse sensitivity issues and maintain an appropriate relationship to the public realm. Particular consideration should be given to the interface between industrial, commercial and residential uses, and the location of precinct edges.

Structure and Configuration of Public Realm

(Relates to Context, Connections, Creativity, Character, Custodianship of Urban Design Protocol)

Public spaces including parks, plazas and streets provide a community's 'living room'. They provide the setting for the community to come together, both informally and in an organised fashion. A well structured public realm framework can provide a strong 'skeleton' for a settlement around which the private realm 'flesh' can develop. A connected network of spaces of different scales and character can meet the differing needs of the community. Detailed design of public spaces can contribute to the overall character of a settlement and can determine the degree to which members of the public identify with a place. The following factors should be considered when determining the location, scale and form of open spaces:

- Primary function of a space (meeting differing needs) – whether it is a place for the community to gather, to watch activity in the surrounding environment, for respite, for visual amenity;

- Creating suitable enclosure;

- Environmental comfort – aspect, protection from wind;

- Maintaining key views to landmarks, natural features;

- Creating a legible environment;

- Providing clear connections that follow pedestrian desire lines.

Consideration should be given to how a co-ordinated public open space framework can be achieved through the District Plan provisions.

Configuration and Form of Movement Network

(Relates to Connections, Choice, Character of Urban Design Protocol)

An organised structure of well defined vehicular and pedestrian connections is important for the efficient functioning and legibility of an urban settlement. The priority of vehicular and pedestrian use should be clearly defined. In order to create a pedestrian focussed environment, a fine grain network of walkways should be provided. The amenity and perceived safety of pedestrian routes is greatly influenced by the character of adjoining development. Buildings that address pedestrian routes in a positive manner, by directly fronting the public space, providing a high level of transparency at ground level, locating balconies at the upper level and including a detailed level of articulation contribute to the

character and visual interest of the pedestrian way and also contributes to the perceived safety of the space by encouraging passive surveillance. It is important to locate appropriate activities at ground level along primary pedestrian routes that will facilitate this type of building form (for example retail, cafes and restaurants). On primary pedestrian routes, residential activity is best located above ground level.

District Plan provisions should ensure an appropriate configuration of connections for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and should ensure that development within the private realm reinforces the function of adjoining parts of the movement network.

Maintaining visual connections to key features is an important means of contributing to the character and legibility of an urban settlement. On the Frankton Flats visual connections to the surrounding mountains are of particular importance. The design of buildings in key locations to act as landmarks with strong visual links to these features will also contribute to the identity and legibility of the settlement.

Built Form

(Relates to Choice, Creativity, Custodianship of Urban Design Protocol)

The overall bulk and location of buildings, together with their configuration and design of detailed elements, play and important role in determining the overall functionality and character of a settlement. For a successful settlement, it is important that sufficient scale and intensity is created to provide appropriate enclosure to open spaces and to generate activity that will make a mix of activities viable. However, this needs to be balanced against preserving the amenity of adjacent sites and open spaces and ensuring an overall scale that contributes to the pedestrian comfort and character of the settlement. At Frankton, it is also important that buildings sit comfortably in their landscape rather than dominating the surrounding landforms.

It is important that built elements are configured to positively address and reinforce the public realm. Enclosure of public spaces with a built edge that fronts the space in a positive manner, contains activities at ground level that will activate the space, and creates a well articulated built edge, will contribute to the functioning and character of the public realm.

Careful design of buildings in key locations to create landmarks within a settlement is an important means of contributing to the structure, legibility and character of a place. While building diversity is generally encouraged within urban settlements, the use of some consistent design elements is an effective means of developing a strong local identity. At

Frankton the use of building forms, materials and detailed design elements that reflect its alpine location would contribute to the creation of a distinctive place.

Recently, there has been a growing awareness of the role of the built environment in the use of natural and physical resources). Consideration should be given to how resources such as power, water, and building materials can be used efficiently and recycled. Consideration should also be given to how the settlement pattern can reduce the requirement for multiple vehicle trips, can shorten trip lengths and can support alternative modes of transport including public transport, walking and cycling.

Sense of Place

(Relates to Character and Creativity of Urban Design Protocol)

'Sense of Place – Auckland in the Pacific' a document prepared by the Community Planning Group of Auckland City Council (2001), notes that:

> *Sense of place refers to an individual's experience of a physical location. Sense of place defines an area, makes it unique and gives it meaning.*

A range of attributes contribute to sense of place including: natural (e.g. landforms, views, landscape, seascape, and vegetation), built (e.g. buildings, land use, parks, streets, infrastructure, connections, icons), social/cultural (e.g. demographics, events and activities, culture, wahi tapu), and personal (e.g. experience, custom, spirituality, background, memory).

A number of elements can be used to enhance the sense of place for an individual site or an entire city. These elements include: diversity, activity, places, design, water, landform, vegetation, materials, colour, and cultural images.

If an appropriate urban framework is put in place, a strong sense of place will evolve over time at Frankton to create a rich and distinctive settlement.
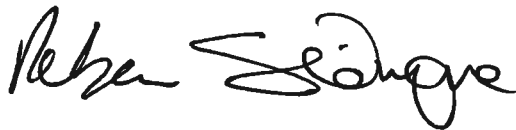
Process

(Relates to Collaboration of Urban Design Protocol)

A challenge in creating new urban settlements in Greenfield areas can be achieving integration between different land holdings. Development of appropriate District Plan provisions should be cognizant of the land ownership pattern in the plan change area and surrounds and should consider whether key elements of the anticipated urban structure can be achieved within this ownership pattern.

04034-03 18-04-07

I trust these comments provide some guidance in considering urban design matters in the plan change process. Please do not hesitate to call and discuss further any points raised in this letter. I would be happy to provide further assistance as the plan change process progresses.

Yours sincerely

R A SKIDMORE URBAN DESIGN LTD

Rebecca Skidmore

Director

New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

Summary of the 7 C's

	The Seven C's
Context	Quality urban design sees buildings, places and spaces not as isolated elements but as part of the whole town or city. For example, a building is connected to its street, the street to its neighbourhood, the neighbourhood to its city, and the city to its region. Urban design has a strong spatial dimension and optimises relationships between buildings, places, spaces, activities and networks. It also recognises that towns and cities are part of a constantly evolving relationship between people, land, culture and the wider environment.
Character	Quality urban design reflects and enhances the distinctive character and culture of our urban environment, and recognises that character is dynamic and evolving, not static. It ensures new buildings and spaces are unique, are appropriate to their location and compliment their historic identity, adding value to our towns and cities by increasing tourism, investment and community pride.
Choice	Quality urban design fosters diversity and offers people choice in the urban form of our towns and cities, and choice in densities, building types, transport options, and activities. Flexible and adaptable design provides for unforeseen uses, and creates resilient and robust towns and cities.
Connections	Good connections enhance choice, support social cohesion, make places lively and safe, and facilitate contact among people. Quality urban design recognises how all networks – streets, railways, walking and cycling routes, services, infrastructure, and communication networks – connect and support healthy neighbourhoods, towns and cities. Places with good connections between activities and with careful placement of facilities benefit from reduced travel times and lower environmental impacts. Where physical layouts and activity patterns are easily understood, and residents and visitors can navigate around the city easily.
Creativity	Quality urban design encourages creative and innovative approaches. Creativity adds richness and diversity, and turns a functional place into a memorable place. Creativity facilitates new ways of thinking, and willingness to think through problems afresh, to experiment and rewrite rules, to harness new technology, and to visualise new futures. Creative urban design supports a dynamic urban cultural life and fosters strong urban identities.
Custodianship	Quality urban design reduces the environmental impacts of our towns and cities through environmentally sustainable and responsive design solutions. Custodianship recognises the lifetime costs of buildings and infrastructure, and aims to hand on places to the next generation in as

	good or better condition. Stewardship of our towns includes the concept of kaitiakitanga. It creates enjoyable, safe public spaces, a quality environment that is cared for, and a sense of ownership and responsibility in all residents and visitors.
Collaboration	Towns and cities are designed incrementally as we make decisions on individual projects. Quality urban design requires good communication and co-ordinated actions from all decision makers: central government, local government, professionals, transport operators, developers and users. To improve our urban design capability we need integrated training, adequately funded research and shared examples of best practise.