

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER The Queenstown Lakes District Proposed District Plan

**STATEMENT OF LANDSCAPE EVIDENCE OF PADDY BAXTER ON BEHALF OF
THE FOLLOWING SUBMITTER: Land Information New Zealand – Submitter # 661
9 June 2017**



INTRODUCTION

Qualifications and experience

1. My full name is Patrick John Baxter. I am a Director of Baxter Design Group Ltd (BDG), a Queenstown based consultancy specialising in Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Master-planning, Landscape Planning and Landscape Assessment. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Science and Diploma of Landscape Architecture. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.
2. I have worked on master planned developments throughout New Zealand and Australia since 1989. I was Principal Landscape Architect with Boffa Miskell Partners from 1989 to 1998, based in Queenstown and working throughout the South Pacific. In 1998 I formed Baxter Brown Planning and Design and that was changed to Baxter Design Group in 2004. Baxter Design Group currently have 10 staff and are involved in projects of varying form and scale. My principal work and experience includes the design of master planned communities and developments on greenfield sites. I have worked on many sites described as 'sensitive' and in particular sites in Outstanding Natural Landscapes.

3. ***Involvement in project***

I prepared a report in October 2015 as part of the submission to the District Plan. I am familiar with the site.

4. My role to date has included the recommendation of appropriate sites for housing, access patterns and layout, both walking and vehicular and the formation of controls that best respond to the site and protect and enhance its inherent landscape qualities. An integral part of the role is the formulation of appropriate design controls for this site.

5. ***Expert Witness Code of Conduct***

I have been provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court's Consolidated Practice Note 2014. I have read and agree to comply with that Code. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying upon the specified evidence of another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

6. ***Purpose and scope of evidence***

My evidence describes the existing landscape character and values, describes the proposal and the design response and assesses the potential landscape effects of the proposal against the relevant matters of the Proposed District Plan.

7. **Attachments**

The following Attachments form part of my evidence

Attachment **A**: Site Plan, showing site context and photographic locations.

Attachment **B**: Structure Plan

Attachment **C**: Indicative Outline Development Plan

Attachment **D**: Photo towards the site from State Highway 6 north of the site

Attachment **E**: Photo towards the site from the south end of Riverside road

Attachment **F**: Photo towards the site from kindergarten off Robertson Road

Attachment **G**: An indicative photo model showing site context

9. **Executive Summary**; In my evidence I discuss the existing landform character, the location of the proposed building platforms, the design controls and the effectiveness of those controls in mitigating effects on the Outstanding Natural Landscape.
10. I conclude that the proposed zoning and development outlined in the Structure Plan (**refer Attachment B**) will not compromise the existing landscape character and qualities and is an appropriate use of that land.

Landscape Description and Statutory Considerations

11. The land is currently zoned Rural General under the existing District Plan and the proposed District Plan. To that end development is currently subject to the assessment matters contained in both the District Plan and The Proposed District Plan. On Planning Map 33 of the Proposed District Plan (PDP) the land is shown as being located within the proposed urban growth boundary and within the Outstanding Natural Landscape line. The Kawarau River and its margins are confirmed as an Outstanding Natural Landscape, as is the larger upper portions of Deer Park heights.
12. At present, the flanks of the Deer Park Heights hill, to the immediate west of the site, has a high natural character embodied in its form and vegetative character and is widely recognised as a valued landform within the context of the landforms of the Wakatipu Basin. I agree with the classification of that landform

as Outstanding Natural landscape. I do consider however that the lower portions of that landscape, although presently exhibiting a natural character, will over time change with a reduction in that natural character. This is largely due to the substantial undeveloped Residential Zone that flanks the lower portions of the landform, running from directly above this site and continuing east towards the western portions of the Kelvin Peninsula and Deer Park Heights. Development of this Residential zoning will inevitably change the local landscape character of the environs surrounding the site.

Site Description

11. The site occupies an area of land approximately 6.69 ha in size (referred to as the 'site' during the course of this evidence). The land is located to the south of the existing Kawarau Falls Bridge, between Kingston Road and Peninsula Road. The land is generally level directly adjacent to Peninsula Road, and sloping down from those levels areas to Kingston Road (State Highway 6). At present the site is heavily vegetated, covered in a mass of mostly exotic vegetation including Gum, Sycamore, Sweet Briar, Gorse, Broom and some indigenous plants.
12. The landform towards the western corner of the site is generally flat in the vicinity of Peninsula Road, sloping gradually to the east. The landform directly west of Kingston road is mostly steep and heavily vegetated.
13. An informal carpark and track is established approximately 100 metres from the western end of the site, linking by walkway, Peninsula Rd and Kingston Road. The site is approximately 850 metres in length and approximately 120 metres in width, tapering done towards the eastern end of the site.
14. Directly east of the site is the development known as Lakes Edge, a completed residential development. No dwellings have been constructed on that land at the time of this report although I understand that title have recently been issued. Directly across Peninsula Road from the site is a undeveloped residential lot and another lot with a dwelling. To the west of that lot, and extending well above that lot, located central of the site, the land is zoned for low density residential development. This zoning continues around towards the western end of Kelvin Peninsula.
15. The new Kawarau Falls bridge is located to the east of the site. Currently in the construction phase (refer **Attachment photographs**), the new bridge is realigned to meet Kingston Road approximately 200 metres along the lower site edge from its western end. To that end the western end of the site, once the new bridge is completed, will no longer face on to State Highway 6 but will now adjoin a new walkway precinct, with walking connection to the historic Kawarau Falls bridge.

Description of the Proposal

16. The proposal seeks to rezone the site to allow for the development of a mix of housing densities together with the establishment of a landscape protection area / buffer (**refer Attachment B**). The proposal includes the following components:

- Two areas proposed for the purpose of housing shown on my Attachment B. The area shown as Housing Area 1 (L1) is approximately 6800 m² in size and the area shown as Housing Area 2 (L2) is approximately 1.55 ha in size.
- The proposed zoning seeks a mix of housing densities within the areas described above. Proposed Housing Area 1 proposes lots between 600-800m² in size. Housing Area 2 proposes lots ranging in size from 800-1200m² in size. In general these are relatively large lots, allowing for appropriate dwellings and landscaping described later in my evidence.
- 2 points of access from Peninsula Road, one to each housing area.
- A public walkway link to be established from Peninsula Road through the site to SH6, linking the road with the pedestrian area being developed as part of the new Kawarau Bridge upgrade.
- A substantial landscape protection area to be retained for the purpose of mitigation and screening and the retention of the existing road corridor character of both Peninsula Road and the State Highway. This includes a proposed buffers 10 metres wide from Peninsula Road and a buffer considerably wider than that between the proposed housing areas and State Highway 6.
- Design Controls in regards to the scale and appearance of dwellings, residential activities and landscape.

17. An indicative Outline Development Plan is attached to my evidence (Attachment C) showing a possible outcome for development. This indicates 8 residential lots on Area L1 and 10 residential lots in Area L2.

Proposed Design Controls

18. The following Design controls are recommended to enable the visual absorption of the development into the surrounding landscape:

Structures - Claddings and Colour

19. All buildings, including any structure larger than 5m², new, relocated, altered or reclad or repainted, are subject to the following in order to ensure that they are visually recessive within the surrounding landscape
- (i). All roofing shall be in Colorsteel 'Ironsand' (or similar in dark grey), or black.
 - (ii). All exterior wall surfaces shall be coloured in the range Black, Dark Green or Dark Grey. Claddings shall be limited to timber (stained, oiled or left natural to weather), steel, stone or concrete. All claddings shall be left natural or, when required, be finished in a similar range of dark colours.
 - (iii). All downpipes, gutters and exterior joinery shall be painted to match the dwelling wall colours.
 - (iv). Pre-painted steel and all roofs (and walls where steel is used as a wall cladding) shall have a light reflectance not greater than 20%.
 - (v). All surface finishes, aside from steel (above) shall have a light reflectance of not greater than 30%.
 - (vi). Wall glazing shall not exceed 2.7 metres in height. All glazing over 2 metres in height shall have a corresponding eave or verandah directly over that glazing with a minimum width of 1.2 metres.

Lighting

- (vii). All lighting shall be down and shall be no higher than 1.2 metres above ground level.
- (viii). No street lighting / exterior shall be allowed aside from bollard lighting with downward light fittings

Landscape Controls

- (ix). Boundary fencing for the purpose of containment shall be in traditional 7 wire fencing to 1m high maximum only. No paling fences or any other solid fencing are permitted. Lot owners are encouraged to undertake planting for the purpose of privacy and shelter.
- (x). In order to promote a contiguous amenity, all major landscape plantings shall be in indigenous plantings only. Exotic planting is permitted however only exotic plants with a maximum maturity height not exceeding 1 metre are permitted.
- (xi). Lot owners shall undertake a buffer strip of indigenous planting 3 metres wide along the western boundary of their lots, being that boundary closest to Peninsula Road. Indigenous plants selected shall reach a minimum of 1.5 metres high at maturity.

Landscape Assessment

18. **Effects on Landscape Quality and Character:** The proposed development is located on the lower flanks of the Deer Park Heights landform. That landform is part of a larger legible glacial Roche Moutonee. The site is located on the lower margins of that landform, between that landform and the landscape margins of the Kawarau River. At present the site is covered in a mix of indigenous vegetation, some planted and some self-seeded and a mix of exotic weed species. I am aware that local community groups have undertaken extensive indigenous plantings on the site, largely at the eastern end of the site. These plantings have grown and matured well and have enhanced the 'entry' to the wider Kelvin Heights residential areas from SH6.
19. Existing human influences on the site are mixed, some established, some yet to be undertaken. In general the site in its current condition forms a visual margin between the Kawarau River, the State Highway and Deer Park Heights. The landscape however is one in transition, with consented development yet to be undertaken on the Lakes Edge subdivision to the west in the form of dwellings, the pedestrian precinct being developed on the State Highway being closed as part of the Kawarau Bridge upgrade and zoned residential land to the immediate south of the site yet to be developed.
20. **Visual Amenity:** Dwellings located within the 2 proposed Housing Areas will be potentially visible from residential areas to the north (Frankton), the State Highway to the north and from Peninsula Road. I address these individually:
21. Northern State Highway Views (**refer Attachment D**): When approaching on State Highway 6 from the north, the site and proposed Housing Areas will be visible, albeit partially visible with screening by existing residential properties and vegetation. Parts of dwellings on both L1 and L2 (**refer my Attachment A**) will be visible from this approach. I do note however that, in time, the backdrop of this view will include residential properties extending somewhat up the flanks of Deer Park Hill. Those dwellings will not have the same restrictions in regards to colour, height and form as proposed in this development. The wider pattern of existing and proposed development around the site, as I have discussed through this evidence, is graphically shown on my **Attachment G**. Taking the visual character and scale of that development into account and the recessive controls proposed on the site I do not consider that the proposed development will adversely affect the wider landscape amenity.
22. I have also considered the effects of the proposed development in the absence of unbuilt form on Deer Park heights, given that may be some time until that development occurs. To that end I still consider that the visual effects of the proposed development will be less than minor, taking into account the wider landscape amenity.
23. From the Kawarau Falls Bridge, and that section of SH6 immediately below the site (east), the proposed development will not be visible, sitting above and behind existing landform.

24. From Peninsula Road, dwellings within the proposed Housing Areas will be partially visible. I note that there is both a proposed 10 metre buffer strip along that edge and a proposed 3 metre indigenous planted strip along within the lot boundaries (as proposed in the design controls). I would also recommend that the 10 metre buffer strip be planted in appropriate indigenous plantings for the purpose of further screening
25. The proposed access to dwellings from Peninsula Road is also restricted to 2 points, minimising the potential trappings of mailboxes, entries etc. usually associated with traditional residential development.
26. Taking these into account, and the recessive contiguous nature of the proposed design controls, I consider that proposed development will allow for the enhancement of the visual experience along Peninsula Road, delivering a substantially green edge to that roadside. This visual character of that edge will differ considerably to that of the Residential Zoned land to the west of Peninsular Road when developed and will benefit the visual experience of those landowners as well.
27. From the general Frankton Residential areas (refer my **Attachments E and F**) the proposed development can be viewed in glimpses from the western portions of that established residential area, when not obscured by dwellings and the established pattern of development. In general those views are restricted to the wester edges of the Remarkables Park residential areas only. From the main shopping centre, and the bulk of the residential areas the proposed development will not be visible. The **Attachments E & F** show views from the western edges. In general my assessment of these views reaches the same conclusions of other viewpoints being that, taking into account both the existing and the consented developed (zoned), the proposed development will occupy a minor part of that wider developed view. Taking into account the size of land to be retained as a landscape protection buffer, and the proposed design controls, I consider that the visual amenity will remain largely intact.
28. **Cumulative effects:** I consider that the cumulative effects of dwellings on the proposed Housing Area within the site will be acceptable and will not degrade the landscape character of the landscape or the visual amenity values. The western flanks of the Deer Park ONL are relatively unique, given the zoned but undeveloped residential development on those and lower elevations of that landform. Furthermore, whilst the margins of the Kawarau River is accepted as an ONF, the character of that margin differs along the length of that river, with some margins truly 'wild' in appearance and others less so. The margins of the Kawarau River, in this locale, are transitional in character, as the river exits the built up urban landscape of Frankton and flows east. To that end these edges do not exhibit the wilder undeveloped character of the bulk of the river and are able to absorb well considered development more readily than would be acceptable downstream without compromising the values of the river landscape.

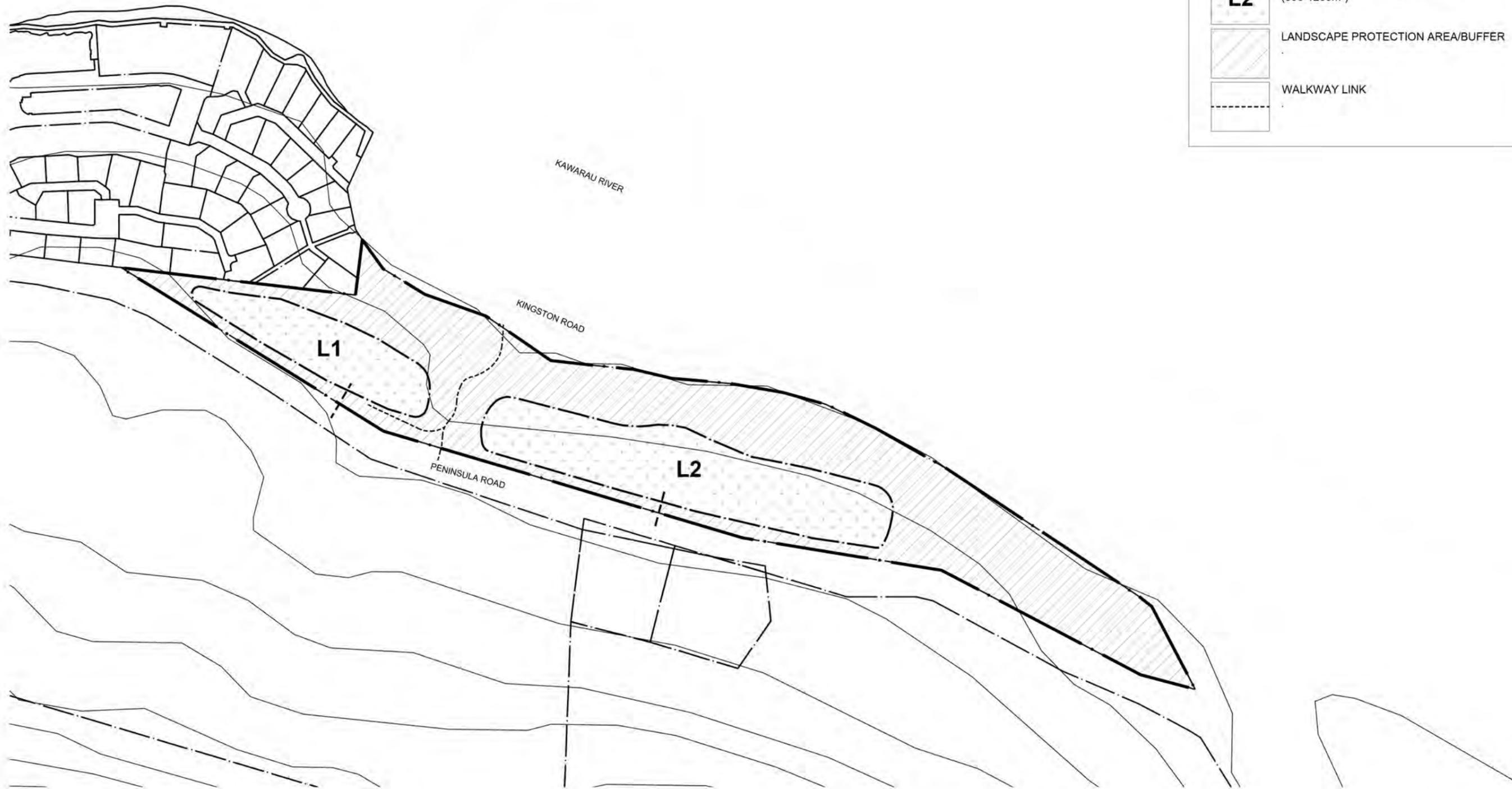
29. To that end I consider that the proposed development on the site is appropriate and, given the substantial area of land to be retained as a landscape protection area, is a well-considered and appropriate 'bookend' to the existing character of the wider surrounding landscape. Within the site, the proposed design controls promote a contiguous pattern of single level recessively coloured dwellings within a larger vegetated and protected landscape; an outcome that will protect the existing amenity of the landscape.
29. **Evidence Statement of Dr Marion Read:** I have read the statement of Dr Marion Read in her Sec 42a report in regards to this submission. In her submission Dr Read acknowledges that the rezoning of this land is considered appropriate. Dr Read however goes on to note (her para 11.7) : *In my opinion, the site could absorb both types of development and the decision as to which type of zoning to apply should be made on bases other than landscape considerations. I note that I do not support the limited LDR development proposed in the Baxter plan included in the submission, considering it to be an inefficient use of the site.*
30. My understanding of that statement by Dr Read is that the submission put forward by LINZ for this land may well have been cautious in its approach. Dr Read acknowledges that the site may not easily 'fit' the requirements of an ONL and, given the moderate natural character of the site and the zoning that abuts the site, *the contribution it makes to the wider ONL of Peninsula Hill is limited.* To that end it may be appropriate to seek a wider LDR, MDR or HDR zoning over the land or a mix thereof.
31. Taking the rest of her statement into account I agree with that statement. I do however consider that there still may be justification from a landscape perspective to protect that steep escarpment adjoining the existing State Highway as a buffer however the areas submitted for housing could be extended. I would also consider that green space could be protected in the vicinity of the Peninsula Road / SH6 intersection, as a 'gateway' buffer to the entry to Kelvin Heights.

P J Baxter

9th June 2017



ACTIVITY AREAS	
---	PRIMARY ACCESSES
L1	LOW DENSITY HOUSING AREA 1 (600-800m ²)
L2	LOW DENSITY HOUSING AREA 2 (800-1200m ²)
▨	LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AREA/BUFFER
---	WALKWAY LINK



ACTIVITY AREAS	
---	PRIMARY ACCESSES
L1	LOW DENSITY HOUSING AREA 1 (600-800m ²)
L2	LOW DENSITY HOUSING AREA 2 (800-1200m ²)
[Hatched Box]	LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AREA/BUFFER
[Dotted Box]	WALKWAY LINK





- LEGEND**
-  Lots 1-19 (traditional housing lots 600 - 1200m2)
 -  Landscape Protection Area/Buffer
 -  Public & Shared Walkway
 -  Shared Courtyard



PHOTO POINT 1 - STATE HIGHWAY 6





PHOTO POINT 2 - RIVERSIDE ROAD, SOUTH END





PHOTO POINT 3 - WALKWAY OFF ROBERTSON ST BY KINDERGARTEN



