

Before the Queenstown Lakes District Council Hearing Panel

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of the renotification of two submissions on Stage 1 of the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan concerning the zoning of land at Arthurs Point by Gertrude's Saddlery Limited and Larchmont Enterprises Limited

Summary of Statement of Evidence of Andrew Fairfax on behalf of Gertrude's Saddlery Limited

01 February 2023

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Summary of evidence

- 1 My full name is Andrew James Fairfax. My background and qualifications are set out in my Statement of Evidence dated 15 November 2022.
- 2 The process of rezoning has been ongoing for over five years since I acquired the land through my company Gertrude's Saddlery Limited (**GSL**) and inherited the previous owners' 2015 submissions to the Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) to rezone the 111 Atley Road (**Site**).
- 3 We've significantly refined what was previously put forward, and approved, as a 'standard' Low Density Residential (**LDR**) Zoning over the whole Site back in 2018. Our revised approach is a reduction to less than a third of the residential lot yield of the zoning approved in 2018.
- 4 It's difficult to understand Council's approach to this hearing process, given the decision it already made in 2018. The landform is unchanged, though with the wildings felled, the historical paddocks are more obvious, as is the connection to, and obvious similarities between, my land and other urban Arthurs Point land. Expert witnesses then and now agree with my assessment when I first looked at the land, that the "rural" zoned remnant of historical farmland is too small and too isolated to be used for farming. As detailed in my Evidence, the publicity and scrutiny on my land is now intense, as a result of the campaign of opposition that opened in national media in 2018 and continues to this day.
- 5 Before, and since, the renotification process commenced, GSL has taken on board extensive feedback from the community. The professional team we engaged came up with what I believe is the best possible rezoning approach for the Site. This master planning approach includes a bespoke structure plan and has been designed to ensure sensitive low-key housing that protects landscape values, and locks in a range of community benefits and infrastructure upgrades, all of which will benefit current and future generations.
- 6 I note that a number of submissions respond to my point in evidence about there being limited other reasonable uses for my land than this rezoning. To clarify what I was trying to explain, I have experienced hugely increased scrutiny of all and any use of my land in recent years. The degree of PR & legal opposition, the interference and intimidation I faced when felling the wildings on my land – or the fact that someone painting a community water tank on my land was photographed from a neighbouring property, to have that normally unremarkable action presented in evidence - are some examples of that scrutiny and opposition. Structure-planning the Site's future use will provide a definitive conclusion to this protracted process, and ensure the best community outcomes for the Site can be realised.

- 7 There are a number of Arthurs Point and wider residents who have provided submissions in support, and key organisations such as the Queenstown Trails Trust and DOC, while neutral overall, are supportive of the environmental and community benefits that will accrue from this rezoning. The Arthurs Point Community Association clarified on Jan 26th that its opposition would revert to “neutral” if two matters were resolved. I believe that those can, and will, be addressed by review of expert evidence in this hearing.
- 8 I have read the submissions and statements filed by further submitters since the filing of my evidence in chief, including statements from Ms Wolt, Mr Semple, Ms Semple, Mr Dery, et al, and the Arthurs Point Community Association.
- 9 Evidence provided by some Further Submitters includes a broad range of differing interpretations and representations. I would like this Hearing to be able to focus on the merits of the proposal under consideration, and to decide on the future of the land without distraction. After considerable thought, I have decided not to respond to those whose evidence disagrees with mine, however I stand by the Evidence I filed on November 15th 2022.
- 10 I am hoping for finality and for closure in this process, for myself, my family and the community. I believe the best way to achieve this is to masterplan the site for sensitive housing and revegetation, and to ensure that it can benefit the community to its full potential. I believe the revised GSL proposal reflects the best possible future use of this Site, and that it reflects the best possible balance of benefits to all concerned.
- 11 I understand those that do not want their neighbourhood to change. This is my neighbourhood too. I’ve lived just up the road for most of my adult life. I want to do right by the wider community, and do right by the land. I see this rezoning as a necessary step in balancing the interests of the community as a whole.