

**BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL
FOR THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN**

UNDER THE Resource Management Act 1991 ("**Act**")

IN THE MATTER OF Stage 3b Proposed District Plan – Rural Visitor
Zone

BETWEEN **MALAGHANS INVESTMENTS LIMITED**

Submitter #31022

AND **QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Planning Authority

**EVIDENCE OF TONY DOUGLAS MILNE IN SUPPORT OF
THE SUBMISSION OF MALAGHANS INVESTMENTS LIMITED**

29 MAY 2020

Counsel instructed:

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INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Tony Douglas Milne.
2. I am a Landscape Architect and Director of Rough & Milne Landscape Architects Limited, which is a Christchurch based consultancy established in 2010.
3. I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Canterbury and a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree from Lincoln University. I am a Registered Member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Inc.
4. I have been practising as a landscape architect since 1995. Our consultancy is involved in a wide range of landscape design and land planning projects throughout New Zealand. Many projects have involved preparing reports and evidence, which address matters of visual impact and landscape effects concerning proposed developments.
5. I am familiar with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note (2014). I confirm that I have complied with that practice note in preparing this evidence. In particular I confirm that my evidence is within my area of expertise and the opinions I have expressed are my own except where I have stated that I have relied on the evidence of other people. I have not omitted any facts known to me that may be material in influencing my evidence.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

6. My evidence is presented on behalf of Malaghans Investments Limited (Submission 31022) which includes two adjacent properties of approximately 7.89ha (the Malaghans site) and 4ha (the Brett Mills site) located at 1352 and 1364 Skippers Road, respectively, within Skippers Canyon. The submitter is seeking the sites to be rezoned RVZ as part of stage 3b of the PDP. This is sought on the basis that the site is located in Skippers Canyon, which is a historic and scenic tourist destination and inclusion of the site in the RVZ would provide opportunity for growth of visitor accommodation within Skippers Canyon.
7. My evidence responds to the landscape evidence provided by Mr Jones where he is critical of the lack of assessment undertaken for the proposed rezoning of the site. It focuses on the appropriateness of the proposed Rural Visitor Zone (RVZ) for Lot 1 and 2 DP19171, which is located within the Rural Zone with an ONL overlay. I address potential issues in regard to the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed Skippers Rural Visitor Area Zone and in particular, the appropriateness and subsequent effects on existing landscape and historic values of Skippers Canyon.

8. In the course of preparing my evidence I have considered the following:
- The Proposed District Plan (PDP), specifically Chapter 3 – Strategic Direction, 6 – Landscapes, Rural Character, 21 – Rural Zone and 26 – Historic Heritage
 - The notified Chapter 46 – Rural Visitor Zone of the PDP.
 - Section 42A Report on Chapter 46 – Rural Visitor Zone, prepared by Ms Emily Grace, dated 18 March 2020.
 - Evidence of Mr Matthew Jones on Landscape Architecture – Rezoning – Rural Visitor Zone, dated 18 March 2020.
 - Evidence of Ms Helen Mellsop on Landscape dated March 2020.
 - The landscape assessment supporting Section 32 Evaluation Report for the Rural Visitor Zone, prepared by Ms Helen Mellsop, dated May 2019.
9. The structure of my evidence is set out below as follows:
- Executive summary
 - Methodology
 - A description of the existing environment, the site and associated values
 - Landscape sensitivity analysis
 - The proposal and RVZ provisions
 - Effects on landscape and visual amenity
 - Appropriateness of the RVZ
 - Conclusion
10. An A3 Graphic Attachment (GA), dated 2 June 2020, is provided in support of my evidence, and includes maps, aerials and photographs illustrating the site, a Landscape Sensitivity Analysis and proposed Structure Plan, which sets out a suitable developable area enabled by the RVZ, within the site.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

11. Malaghans Investments Limited is seeking rezoning of Lot 1 and 2 DP19171 within the Rural Visitor Zone (RVZ). The application site is currently zoned Rural Zone with an overlay of Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) and Skippers Heritage Overlay Area.
12. The proposed zone is located on Stapleton's Terrace, an elevated terrace which lies above and east of the Shotover River and Skippers Road. The site displays an high country rural character located on the

river terrace landforms associated with the Shotover River Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF) and within the ONL (District Wide) which encompasses Skippers Canyon and its mountainous surrounds. Skippers Heritage Overlay Area extends over the site and surrounds.

13. The proposal includes bespoke provisions for the zone, including a request for a 7m building height limit, the removal of the building setback from zone boundaries, and additional provisions relating to building materials and colour to ensure built form appropriately takes into account the heritage values of Skippers.
14. An assessment of the site's landscape sensitivity has been undertaken, incorporating analysis of the site's character and values. The landscape sensitivity analysis identifies areas of lower landscape sensitivity which has informed the proposed Developable Area indicated on the Structure Plan. This area is considered to be an appropriate location for potential future development within the proposed RVZ.
15. The effects of the proposed rezoning have been considered in the context of the surrounding ONL, rural landscape character, and have also taken into account the Skippers Heritage Overlay. I understand that the submitter is seeking that the RVZ is excluded from the Skippers Heritage Overlay but the heritage values inherent in the overlay are included into the new RVZ provisions.
16. I consider that in context of the ONL, effects on the landscape values are largely avoided through implementation of development within areas of lower landscape sensitivity. In relation to landscape character and heritage values, I consider that the proposal has potential to complement the existing environment through use of heritage colours, textures and materials and in the context of rural settlement patterns throughout Skippers Canyon.
17. Effects on visual amenity have been considered in the context of Skippers Road, the Shotover River and the wider Skippers Canyon. For the most part, the proposed Developable Area is visually discrete and available views are intermittent and viewed against a vast and complex landscape. I consider that in the context of small enclaves of existing development within Skippers Canyon, and subject to the RVZ provisions and additional rules regarding height and use of heritage colours and materials, the proposal has potential to complement the visual amenity of the receiving environment.
18. In my opinion, the proposed zone will provide for appropriately located and scaled development within Skippers Canyon for the purpose of visitor industry related use, while maintaining the existing values of the ONL and the landscape character of the surrounding rural zone; with opportunities to complement heritage values and enhance visual amenity values from within the receiving environment.

METHODOLOGY

19. This evidence has been set out to respond the report prepared by Mr Jones¹. On page 16 and 24 of his report, Mr Jones has outlined requirements for detailed landscape analysis and assessment to provide a basis for justification of the potential future development opportunities and to determine if the proposed RVZ rezoning request is appropriate. A critical component of this assessment is the determination of the site's landscape sensitivity rating(s), which provides a basis for potential activity status of future development in relation to the RVZ provisions. Mr Jones sets out a full list of what he considers to be the requirements for further detailed landscape analysis and assessment on page 45 of his report, a summary of this follows and has been utilised to guide my evidence:
- (a) Scaled aerial photographs and contour mapping of the site and immediate context
 - (b) Identification, description and mapping of the site's attributes and values
 - (c) Identification of opportunities and constraints of the site
 - (d) Determination and mapping of the landscape sensitivity rating(s) of the site
 - (e) Site mapping in relation to future development opportunities within the proposed zone
 - (f) Contextual panoramic photographs of the site
 - (g) Visual amenity values and assessment
 - (h) Assessment of landscape effects on values and character of the site and its setting
20. The methodology and terminology used for assessment of landscape and visual amenity effects has been informed by the methodology for landscape and visual assessment supplementary evidence by Bridget Gilbert to the EC in regard to Topic 2 of the QLDPR. In which I was also involved as one of six landscape architects that provided comment on the evidence as it was being prepared. This represents a consistent methodology and terminology that is accepted across the profession. This methodology is intended to guide assessments until it is superseded when the NZILA releases its best practice note next year. *Refer to Appendix A of this evidence for associated tables and definitions.*

THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

21. Broadly speaking, the receiving environment is Skippers Canyon, a narrow river gorge which contains the Shotover River. The area is located directly north of Queenstown and west of Coronet Peak, within a remote and mountainous area just beyond the Wakatipu Basin. *Refer Sheet 4 – 5 of the GA.*
22. Skippers Canyon is a remote and rugged landscape, strongly confined by the surrounding steep and deeply incised mountainous topography comprised of steep slopes, rocky outcrops, deeply fissured

¹ Second Statement of Evidence of Matthew Jones. Landscape Architecture – Rezoning – Rural Visitor Zone. 18 March 2020.

gullies, elevated terraces and near vertical escarpments which descend dramatically into the Shotover River gorge.

23. Access is via Skippers Road which commences at Arthurs Point providing access to Coronet Peak Ski Field, before intersecting to form a narrow gravel road which winds its way through Skippers Canyon to the historic township of Skippers.
24. Stapletons Terrace is an elevated alluvial terrace surrounded by Mt Marsden (1344 masl) to the north-east, Deep Creek to the south and the Shotover River to the east. Blue Jacket Terrace and Boomerang Terrace are elevated alluvial terraces located directly opposite the Shotover River and Sainsburys Terrace is located to the north.
25. The underlying geology of the area, formed by the process of strong natural and glacial erosion, is comprised of schist rock with gravel and alluvium making up the terraces and valley floors. Drainage patterns are an intricate network of permanent and ephemeral watercourses including Deep Creek and Jacket Creek which drain into the Shotover River
26. Land use predominately consists of high country pastoral farming and recreational tourist operations which include Go Orange Rafting, Bungy Jumping, Heritage and Discovery Tours and 4WD Safari Tours. The Shotover Canyon Jet and Go Orange Rafting put-in location is immediately west of the application site. There are a small number of rural lifestyle properties located within Skippers Canyon. Buildings are generally located in small enclaves on terraces adjacent to the river gorge.
27. Vegetation is sparse, consisting predominately of indigenous alpine snow tussock, low sub-alpine shrubs of dracophyllum, hebe, olearia and occasional wilding pines. Mountain beech, wineberry, broadleaf and coprosma are confined to the gullies. Small groups of exotic trees, commonly poplar and willow, identify sites of early and existing habitation.
28. The landscape of Skippers Canyon is characterised as a remote high country alpine environment and has a **high country rural character** influenced by a combination of natural and human forces. It has **very high natural character**² expressive of natural patterns and processes, being comprised of rock and scree slopes with minimal vegetation cover and the steep river gorge. The topography and river gorge are a highly legible landscape which contributes to a sense of enclosure, naturalness, scenic and transient qualities. The area has a rich pastoral and gold mining history, with many sites of historical significance. Recreation values are associated with activities on the Shotover River. This combination

² Ecosystem Factors in the assessment of naturalness (After Sukopp 1971 and van der Maarel (1975).

of natural, aesthetic and associative values affords **very high landscape values** which also contributes to **very high visual amenity**.

29. The Rural Zone that surrounds the site is classified as ONL and the Shotover River classified as an ONF. The Skippers Heritage Landscape overlay extends over the wider Skippers Canyon area and includes the historic Skippers township. *Refer Sheet 6 – 7 of the GA.*

THE SITE

30. The application site, encompassing Lot 1 and 2 DP19171 is 11.9 ha and is two rural properties located some 17km directly north of Queenstown at 1352 and 1364 Skippers Road, Skippers Canyon. *Refer to Sheets 12 – 14 of the GA for mapping of site features.*
31. It forms an irregular rectangular shape, orientated north to south. The site is bounded by Skippers Road to the west, Deep Creek gorge to the south and separated by a gully from an undeveloped site to the north identified as Section 8 Block XI Shotover SD. Steep slopes comprising the base of a spur extending from Mt. Marsden (1344 masl) rises from within the site and beyond the east boundary to a high point of 820 masl.
32. Landform within the site is varied. A narrow area of flat to gently sloping terrain skirts the edge of an escarpment near the western boundary before transitioning abruptly to steep mountain slopes which rise steeply to the east. The elevated position between 500 – 600 masl allows for extensive views out to the Shotover River and wider mountainous landscape of the Shotover Gorge.
33. Buildings within the site consist of two residential dwellings, one on each lot, and associated sheds. Access is from Skippers Road from the north-west site boundary via a simple gravel and grass drive. A network of unformed trails run throughout the site and there is evidence of a former small dam
34. Vegetation consists of areas of mown lawn, unmodified pasture grass and silver tussock grassland, with grey scrubland of matagouri, coprosma and olearia. Hawthorn and briar rose are present throughout the site. There are groups of exotic trees located within the immediate surrounds of buildings. Most of the vegetation within the site has sustained extensive fire damage.
35. The landscape character of the site characterised as a **high country rural character** and has a **moderate-high level of natural character**³ typically associated with low-moderate levels of human influence. The site forms part of the general broadscale Skippers Canyon setting which has an overall very high legibility, visual coherence, aesthetic, and scenic value.

³ Ecosystem Factors in the assessment of naturalness (After Sukopp 1971 and van der Maarel (1975).

36. Much of the amenity is based on the wider setting, derived from extensive uninterrupted views of Skippers Canyon and the surrounding mountains and the close proximity to the Shotover River. The scenic and open space value of the site, coupled with intrinsic historic and cultural values attached to past use of the site and recreation values associated with the Shotover River, contribute **to high landscape values** and **high visual amenity**.

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

37. As described in Policy 46.2.2.1 of Chapter 46, proposed development areas within the RVZ seeks to enable and consolidate buildings in areas that are not identified as high or moderate-high landscape sensitivity. Identification of landscape sensitivity is therefore a critical component in determining the appropriateness of the application of the RVZ.
38. The definition for landscape sensitivity is set out from the NZILA Best Practice Note⁴:
- Landscape sensitivity is the degree to which the character and values of a particular landscape are susceptible to the scale of external change.*
39. Linked to landscape sensitivity is the concept of landscape capacity, defined as⁵:
- Landscape capacity the amount of change the landscape can accommodate without substantially altering or compromising existing character and values.*
40. As described in the Section 42A report prepared by Ms Grace's⁶, evaluation of the landscape sensitivity requires three areas, if applicable, be identified within each RVZ: high landscape sensitivity areas, moderate-high landscape sensitivity areas and the remainder of the RVZ area.
41. Those areas identified as being able to accommodate development while protecting the values of the surrounding ONL/landscape are the areas of lower landscape sensitivity. Provisions in the PDP notified Chapter 46 for such areas are relatively enabling as a controlled activity status applies to buildings and does not include a site coverage limit. In areas identified as having less capacity to absorb development, such as those considered to have moderate-high or high landscape sensitivity, the activity status is discretionary and non-complying, respectively.
42. It is considered that overall, the receiving environment of Skippers Canyon has a **moderate-high level** of landscape sensitivity, particularly due to topography, remoteness, and relative openness. A detailed analysis of the landscape sensitivity of the site has identified areas of high, moderate-high

⁴ NZILA Best Practice Note: Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 10.1. 2010.

⁵ NZILA Best Practice Note: Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 10.1. 2010.

⁶ Section 42A Report of Emily Suzanne Grace. Chapter 46 Rural Visitor Zone. 18 March 2020.

and areas of lower landscape sensitivity. *Refer to Sheet 15 of the GA.* Areas of lower sensitivity have some capacity to absorb changes due to lower visual significance and more suitable site conditions for development. Therefore, carefully considered changes of an appropriate nature could potentially be absorbed into lower sensitivity areas within the site.

THE PROPOSAL

43. Malaghans Investments Limited propose the rezoning of an 11.9ha property located at 1352 and 1364 Skippers Road within Skippers Canyon from Rural Zone to Rural Visitor Zone in order *'to provide for visitor industry activities at a location within a landscape that can accommodate change while avoiding, remedying and mitigating adverse effects on an ONL'*.
44. The proposed RVZ is supported by a Structure Plan which identifies an area considered to be suitable for development under the proposed RVZ. *Refer to Sheet 16 of the GA.* The development of the Structure Plan has been an iterative process, informed by the landscape sensitivity analysis and ZTV studies of visual influence.
45. The proposed Developable Area is located within an area of lower landscape sensitivity; exhibiting factors including, but are not limited to, favourable topography, ease of access, reasonable sunlight access, quality views and presence of existing modifications. The proposed Developable Area excludes areas identified as high and moderate-high sensitivity.
46. The proposed Developable Area is approximately 5.1ha located within a narrow strip of flat to gently sloping landform which skirts along the western boundary of the site. The area is situated 20m from Skippers Road on an elevated terrace above the road. Direct access from Skippers Road is via an existing farm track through the north-west site boundary. The area is between 500 – 520 masl and considered to have suitable topography and site attributes to enable development. Existing modifications within this area include two existing dwellings, sheds, fencelines, farm tracks, trails and extensive fire damage. It is also relatively visually discrete due to the topography of Skippers Canyon. It exhibits a high country rural character with strong visual connection to the Shotover River, Shotover Gorge, Skippers Canyon, and wider mountainous surrounds.

Rural Visitor Zone Provisions

47. The RVZ Chapter provisions includes a series of development standards for *controlled activities* within areas of lower sensitivity, which address matters of relevance to the management of landscape effects. These include:
 - Building height limit of 6m

- Building size limit of 500m²
 - Glare controls
 - Waterbody setback of 20m
 - Building setback of 10m from the zone boundary
48. The Section 42A report prepared by Ms. Grace⁷ recommends the following further standards be adopted for the zone:
- Total building coverage of 500m² within areas of lower landscape sensitivity
 - Inclusion of the Wakatipu Basin building material and colours standard
49. In general, I support the inclusion of these standards and consider this to be an appropriate means for managing landscape effects. Although I do consider the site to have a greater capacity for development than the total building coverage of 500m², set forth in the recommended standards of the Section 42A report, I consider the Restricted Discretionary consent process should ensure built form over this threshold can be appropriately incorporated.
50. I do however support an amendment to standard 46.5.1.1 to allow a 7m for building height limit for controlled activity within the Skippers zone. This will provide for additional design flexibility and is proposed on the basis that buildings are located within areas of the site that are not highly visible and the topography of the proposed Developable Area would allow for built form to be subtly positioned. From intermittent viewpoints in the landscape in which the site is visible, built form will be seen in the context of the surrounding landform set against a backdrop of the steep hillsides and avoiding a skyline effect.
51. Rule 46.5.5 is sought to be amended such that there will be no building setback from the zone boundary. In this instance I can support this amendment because the sites surrounding the zone are remote and contain no sensitive receivers. Practically, it does not make sense to have a control like this where there will be no effect on landscape values.
52. I also support a variation to standard 46.5.8 in regard to building material and colour to allow for incorporation of heritage colours, textures and materials which complement the heritage of Skippers Canyon, and the new rule 46.5.10 which requires roading and infrastructure to be of a rural standard.

⁷ Section 42A Report of Emily Suzanne Grace. Chapter 46 Rural Visitor Zone. 18 March 2020.

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

53. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how it is experienced. This may in turn affect the perceived value ascribed to the landscape. At a detailed local scale, any change proposed for the landscape must rely on a character description and evaluation to establish the landscape's capacity to absorb development without adverse effects on its recognised values and the compatibility and appropriateness of the proposed development within the site and surrounding landscape.
54. The purpose of the RVZ, as described previously and in Chapter 46 of the PDP, is to provide locations for visitor industry activities within ONLs where the values of the ONL are maintained or enhanced. Locating proposed development outside areas of high or moderate-high landscape sensitivity has been identified as a critical step to protect the landscape values of the ONL.
55. Within the context of the surrounding ONL and the Skippers Canyon landscape, I consider the proposed rezoning to be appropriate as the Structure Plan and proposed Developable Area have been informed by the landscape sensitivity analysis of the site's character and values, in order to select a suitable area for development to occur within the RVZ, specifically excluding areas of high or moderate-high sensitivity from the proposed Developable Areas.
56. Further, given the additional recommended provisions of the RVZ which place a restriction on buildings over 500m² and including the proposed provisions regarding use of heritage colour and a 7m height limit, I consider landscape effects on the ONL will be at most moderate-low. In my opinion, a low density of built form will constitute a minor change which is not out of character within the receiving environment and will not disturb the pre-development landscape values of the ONL, as a result I consider these effects will not necessarily be adverse.
57. It is also important to consider the values associated with the rural landscape character and the Skippers Heritage Overlay which are strongly associated with the natural setting, overlay of pastoral land use and the historical context and heritage. In this regard, I consider the proposed Skippers RVZ has potential to complement the character of the rural landscape and the heritage values of Skippers. As the existing patterns of rural enclaves on the low terraces adjacent to the river gorge currently contribute to high aesthetic and associative values in the context, so will appropriately designed and located development on the application site. To ensure this, built form within the proposed Developable Area should be influenced by the heritage of Skippers in terms of form, material and colour.

58. As a result, I consider the proposed RVZ will enable a coordinated approach to provide visitor accommodation and ancillary activities in an appropriate location, which will maintain the landscape values of the ONL and the character of the high country rural landscape and the heritage values of Skippers.

EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY

59. A Zone of theoretical visibility study has been undertaken utilising GIS to determine the extent of visibility of the site within the receiving environment. *Refer to Sheet 11 of the GA.* The visibility of the application site is highly contained to Skippers Canyon and, given the complex topography, views of the site will be experienced intermittently from short sections of Skippers Road and the Shotover River.
60. Within the receiving environment, existing modifications including built form, roads and gently sloping green pastures on the terraces are visible set amongst the complex topography of the river gorge and a backdrop of mountainous landforms. Rather than detracting from the amenity of the landscape, these modifications contribute to the very high visual amenity due to the heritage values associated with these settlements.
61. The proposed Developable Area has been informed by the ZTV study, landscape sensitivity analysis and analysis of the site's attributes, as a result, future development will be located within areas of lower sensitivity which also display appropriate characteristics for development, including less visual influence, presence of existing modifications and suitable terrain.
62. The area identified on the Structure Plan as the proposed Developable Area encompasses a narrow north-south oriented terrace. While likely visible from the corridors identified on the ZTV analysis, I consider that development in this area can be subtly positioned, and when paired with an appropriate palette of colours and materials referencing the heritage of Skippers Canyon, it will not appear out of character in the context of other low density settlements. As a result, I consider that effects on visual amenity resulting from the proposed rezoning will be at most moderate-low and will not necessarily be adverse as development has potential to complement the existing visual amenity of Skippers Canyon.

THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE RVZ

63. Through my assessment of the proposed zone, and in alignment with Mr Jones' evidence⁸, I consider that there is capacity, from a landscape perspective, for the application site to accommodate the type

⁸ Second Statement of Evidence of Matthew Jones. Landscape Architecture – Rezoning – Rural Visitor Zone. 18 March 2020.

of development anticipated within the notified RVZ. Mr Jones has set out the following key factors which I have largely addressed in my assessment above and to which I now provide a summarised response.

Whether the site is located within an ONL and has a remote character.

64. The site is located within the Rural Zone with an ONL overlay. The site has a high country rural character and occupies a physically remote location in Skippers Canyon.

Whether the site is relatively visually discrete in views from public places and neighbouring dwellings.

65. The topography, aspect, and relative open and elevated location of the site contribute to the extent of visibility within the immediate Skippers Canyon context. As indicated by the ZTV analysis, intermittent views of the site are available from the Shotover River and Skippers Road but overall, given the presence of clustered vegetation and the elevated nature of the site, it is considered to be visually discrete.

Whether the site or immediate context displays a modified character.

66. As described previously, the site displays a high level of natural character typical of a high country rural landscape. Visible modifications are most prevalent on the north-south oriented terrace and include areas of mown grass, exotic trees, dwellings and sheds, fencelines, farm tracks, trails and extensive fire damage. As such, the proposed Developable Area encompasses the more modified and level north-south oriented terrace. Beyond this, areas of escarpment to the west and steep mountain slope to the east are less modified and subsequently excluded from the Developable Area proposed on the Structure Plan.

Whether additional development of the type anticipated by the notified RVZ will generate adverse cumulative effects.

67. The RMA describes cumulative effects as an *'effect which arises over time or in combination with other effects – regardless of the scale, intensity, duration or frequency of the effect'*⁹.
68. The Section 42A RVZ provisions, together with bespoke rules regarding a building height limit of 7m and use of heritage colours and materials which reflect the unique character of Skippers, will provide

⁹ Section 3 of the RMA 1991

an appropriate outcome for the site and setting by protecting and maintaining landscape values and avoiding adverse cumulative effects.

Whether there are reasonably 'buildable' locations within the proposed rezoning area.

69. As described previously, topography within the site varies from flat to gently sloping on the terrace landform to steep mountain slopes to the east. Areas within the site that would allow for discrete areas of development are generally confined to the flat to gently sloping topography of the north-south oriented terrace. These areas exhibit site attributes favourable for development including gentle topography, ease of access, quality views and presence of existing site modifications. The proposed Developable Area identified on the Structure Plan encompasses these areas which are also identified as having a lower landscape sensitivity, ensuring protection for the landscape values of the ONL.

CONCLUSION

70. The Skippers RVZ proposed Structure Plan and rules provide a holistic approach to development while ensuring protection of landscape values and visual amenity. Landscape sensitivity and visual influence of the site have been assessed and have informed preparation of the proposed Structure Plan. The proposed Developable Area is located in an area of lower sensitivity and less visibility with site attributes which are suitable for development. This, combined with the standard RVZ rules regarding building coverage and the proposed bespoke rules, will ensure development within the proposed zone is appropriate for the site and surrounds. As a result I consider the scale and nature of effects on landscape and visual amenity will be moderate-low at most and will not necessarily be adverse as the proposed development has the potential to complement the heritage values of Skippers and will maintain landscape values of the ONL and the character of the surrounding rural environment. Therefore, the proposed Skippers RVZ can be supported on landscape grounds.

Dated this 2 June 2020



Tony Milne

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS & TABLES

Natural Character

Table 1: Natural Character Assessment Rating¹⁰

Natural character rating	Very High		High		Moderate - High		Moderate		Moderate-Low		Low		Very Low	
	Natural	Near-natural	Very weakly influenced	Semi-natural	Weakly influenced	Agricultural	Moderately disturbed	Agricultural	Strongly influenced	Near cultural	Very strongly influenced	Cultural	Extremely disturbed	
Ecological naturalness state	Natural	Near-natural	Very weakly influenced	Semi-natural	Weakly influenced	Agricultural	Moderately disturbed	Agricultural	Strongly influenced	Near cultural	Very strongly influenced	Cultural	Extremely disturbed	
Measure of human influence	Non-disturbed	Very weakly influenced		Managed exotic forests, extensive pastoral farmland, slight improvements		Intensive grazing, developed pasture. Selection of species in terms of grazing potential (ie clover ryegrass pasture)	Extensive arable land, irrigation, fertilised, limed, use of pesticides, drainage	Regular cultivation, intensively cropped arable land, horticultural cropping, drainage, heavy use of fertiliser and pesticides		Parkland, greenways, green open space				
Typical habitats	Self-regulating Habitats approaching pristine state – no human modifications to ecosystems	Forest vegetation communities with species and structure typical of the site, limited harvesting or clearing of biomass, light fertiliser, pastoralism		Maybe naturally occurring layers beneath exotic canopy		Improved pasture, annual crops		Perennial or annual crops dominant		Amenity plants, turf, ephemeral weeds				
Vegetation structure	No change	No change		Some species spontaneous, e.g. understory in exotic forestry		Few species spontaneous, other than weeds. Weed growth controlled		Few species spontaneous, other than weeds. Weed growth controlled		Amenity plants, turf, ephemeral weeds				
Floristic composition	No change	Most species spontaneous		Small, superficial		Moderate		Drastic		Few to no species spontaneous, other than weeds. Weed growth generally controlled			No species spontaneous, other than weeds.	
Substrate change	No change	Few changes						Drastic		Drastic-artificial			Drastic, compaction, artificial, impervious surfaces	

¹⁰ Ecosystem Factors in the assessment of naturalness (After Sukopp 1971 and van der Maarel (1975).

Landscape Effects

Table 2: Landscape Effects Rating Scale¹¹

Magnitude/Degrees	Use and Definition
Very Low	Negligible loss of or modification of key elements, features, characteristics, and/or values of the baseline. Influence of new elements on landscape character and/or landscape value is barely discernible.
Low	Very little material loss of or modification to key elements, features, characteristics and/or values. New elements integrate seamlessly into the pre-development landscape character and/or landscape values.
Moderate-Low	Minor loss of or modification of one or more key elements, features, characteristics and/or values. New elements are not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape and do not disturb the pre-development landscape character and/or landscape values.
Moderate	Partial loss of or modification of key elements, features, characteristics and/or values. The pre-development landscape character and/or landscape value remains evident but is changed.
Moderate-High	Modifications of several key elements, features, characteristics and/or values. The pre-development landscape character and/or landscape values remain evident but materially changed.
High	Major modification or loss of most key elements, features, characteristics and/or values. Little of the pre-development landscape character remains and amounts to a significant change in the landscape character and/or landscape values.
Very High	Total loss of key elements, features, characteristics and/or values. Amounts to a very significant change in landscape character and/or landscape values.

Visual Effects

Table 3: Visual Amenity Effects Rating Scale¹²

Magnitude/Degrees	Use and Definition
Very Low	Negligible loss of or modification to key elements, features and/or characteristics of the baseline. Visual influence of new elements is barely discernible.
Low	Very little material loss of or modification to key elements, features and/or characteristics. New elements integrate seamlessly into the pre-development visual environment.
Moderate-Low	Minor loss of or modification to one or more key elements, features, and/or characteristics. New elements are not uncharacteristic within the visual environment and do not disturb the pre-development visual amenity.
Moderate	Partial loss of or modification to key elements, features, and/or characteristics. The pre-development visual amenity remains evident but is changed.

¹¹ Supplementary Statement of Evidence of Bridget Mary Gilbert for Queenstown Lakes District Council, Topic 2-Rural Landscapes, Annexure 2: Guidelines for the Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects, 29 April 2019

¹² Supplementary Statement of Evidence of Bridget Mary Gilbert for Queenstown Lakes District Council, Topic 2-Rural Landscapes, Annexure 2: Guidelines for the Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects, 29 April 2019

Moderate-High	Modifications of several key elements, features and/or characteristics. The pre-development visual amenity remains evident but materially changed.
High	Major modification or loss of most key elements, features and/or characteristics. Little of the pre-development visual amenity remains and amounts to a significant change in visual amenity values.
Very High	Total loss of key elements, features and/or characteristics, which amounts to a very significant change in visual amenity.

Adverse Effects

Table 4: Determining the Nature of Effects¹³

Nature of Effect	Use and Definition
Adverse (negative)	The proposed development would be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform which results in a reduction in landscape and / or visual amenity values.
Neutral (benign)	The Proposed development would complement (or blend in with) the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape maintaining existing landscape and / or visual amenity values.
Beneficial (positive)	The proposed development would enhance the landscape and / or visual amenity through removal or restoration of existing degraded landscape uses and / or addition of positive elements or features.

Table 5: Minor Effects for Notification Determination and Non-complying Activities

Very Low	Low	Moderate-Low	Moderate	Moderate-High	High	Very High
Less than minor	Minor		More than minor		Significant	

¹³ Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment Methodology, Appendix A, Boffa Miskell, 5 April 2018