

REPORT TO: Alyson Schuler
FROM: Antony Rewcastle (Landscape Architect)
REFERENCE: 403006 – Kirimoko (Plan Change 13) – Wanaka
SUBJECT: Report on Landscape Issues Arising from Submissions
DATE: Wednesday, 26 September 2007

INTRODUCTION

1. The following report has been requested by the Queenstown-Lakes District Council to provide a review of submissions as they relate to landscape issues to accompany the planner's report. Approximately 68 submissions have been received regarding Plan Change 13. Not all of these are relevant to this report.
2. The majority of submissions (approximately 51) have been classified as a request for provision of public open space, specifically for the provision of mountain bike trails, trail heads, and access, and linking of these to existing and proposed trails in 'Sticky Forest', Peninsula Bay, and Lake Wanaka.
3. Some of the submissions request a more broad scale planning approach which would incorporate land to the east of the Kirimoko Block. Other submissions relate to the identified 'no build' line that contains low density residential development and protects elevated (and more sensitive) parts of the site.

SITE DESCRIPTION

4. The subject site comprises a 58.57 hectare block of land known as the Kirimoko Block in Wanaka. This area presently forms 13 Rural General zoned allotments that extend between Aubrey Road and Rata Street and adjoins the suburban periphery of Wanaka's Low Density Residential areas to the west and south.

BACKGROUND

5. A 'final' landscape report was prepared by Rebecca Ramsay (Landscape Architect, CivicCorp) on the 27.06.2005, which followed a preliminary report prepared in December 2004. Rebecca Ramsay then ceased her involvement in this plan change process.
6. Following Rebecca Ramsay's departure, Rhys Girvan (Landscape Architect, CivicCorp) reviewed identified areas of landscape sensitivity throughout the site and finalised the location of a landscape sensitivity line. A memo was prepared by Rhys Girvan (Landscape Architect) on the 13 June 2006, in addendum to a landscape report prepared on the 27th March 2006. Rhys Girvan has since left CivicCorp and subsequently ceased being involved in this plan change process.
7. The memo stated the following with regard to the eastern boundary:

10. *"I consider it critical that the containment of residential development along the eastern boundary defines a hard edge in which built form is contained within a logically defined topographic area. This edge would form the basis of an open-space corridor protecting the legibility and character of the more elevated moraine feature extending in a north-south direction along this area of the site. While residential development along the adjoining Peak View Ridge area already compromises some of the legibility of this elevated land area, open and elevated spurs continue west from these properties into the eastern boundary of the Kirimoko Block. I consider such spur areas within the Kirimoko Block provide remnant elements of topography upon which residential development should be nestled below to appropriately contain the apparent sprawl of low-density residential development up and over this elevated edge of the township.*
11. *For the sake of clarity, I have provided a plan that illustrates my identified landscape sensitivity line in appendix 2 to this report. This line follows closely the undulating line adopted by Ralph Kruger (March, 2006). I have identified this line through a ground based analysis, in which GPS points were obtained to define what I consider to be the upper limit of where built form should be contained. This line accepts residential development can extend beyond the initial sensitivity line adopted by Rebecca Ramsay but continues to restrict the inclusion of built form along the more elevated and prominent areas of the site.*
12. *I acknowledge that my identified landscape sensitivity line does not coincide with the 20 metre no-build linear setback proposed by the Kirimoko Group. I consider the identification of a linear 20 metre set-back does not reflect the undulating nature of topography over this terrain. Accordingly, I do not accept this proposed line provides an appropriate containment of built form through this area. Such a setback would allow future built form to extend up onto prominent elevated spur areas in a manner that compromises the amenity and character of the eastern boundary of the site. Such sensitivity reflects both the extent of visual prominence elevated spur areas provide and a degree of legibility offered by these open and elevated areas of moraine topography. Such land-form provides an important aspect of the site offering visual amenity and natural character to the wider Wanaka landscape."*
8. In summary, it is my understanding that a 'no build' line is proposed which extends from the Peninsula Bay line at the northern boundary, roughly follows between the 340m and 350m contour lines, before descending slightly along the eastern boundary to protect the elevated (and more sensitive) spurs. This line intends to contain low density residential development within a 'hard edge', and makes provision for an open-space corridor across the higher, more visually sensitive parts of the site.

LANDSCAPE ISSUES / ASSESSMENT

General Comments on Submissions

9. Submissions include a request for landscape protection (no development). I understand the intent of the plan change is to make provision for low density residential zoning in areas which can absorb such development without significantly adversely affecting the character of the wider Wanaka landscape. This process enables those land owners with development aspirations to address those aspirations, in the form of creation of areas of low density residential development, whilst providing an open space area which will act as an asset to neighbouring properties and the wider Wanaka community.
10. A large number of submissions (approximately 51) request provision for public open space (no build areas), specifically for the provision of mountain bike trails, trail heads, and access, and linking of these to existing and proposed trails in 'Sticky Forest', Peninsula Bay and to Lake Wanaka. The proposed 'no build' line makes provision for an area of open space (no build area) above low density residential development. I understand the ownership of this open space area is contained within private ownership. The Kirimoko Group has agreed to grant an easement to the Council to provide for public access across the site, and I consider the area would be suited to containing cycle/ pedestrian access. This access should minimise variation in altitude in order to improve efficiency of the track and minimise the requirement for earthworks. The proposed 'no build' line allows for the track to follow contour lines. Planting controls within the open space area, which maintain open character should also enable views from the track over proposed residential development to Lake Wanaka in the west.

11. The area adjacent to the proposed road at the northern boundary of the site is proposed to join the Peninsula Bay 'open space landscape protection' zone. I believe this area should be considered to accommodate a trail head, although more detailed site analysis and design is required to facilitate this. Additional access points are proposed from Aubrey Rd (1) and Kirimoko Crescent (2). A detailed landscape plan should make provisions for these access points in order to promote connectivity through this elevated part of the site.
12. With the exception of the Wanaka 2020 plan, I understand that an area wide resource study of landscape and ecological values has not been undertaken as part of Plan Change 13. A more broad scale approach could potentially include consideration of the north-east facing landform to the east of the Kirimoko Block (incorporating Allenby Farms Ltd and Coastal Land Trust Holding Ltd properties). However, this will be undertaken as part of the Wanaka Structure Plan process. I understand this plan change process provides for an eastern boundary to Wanaka's low density residential development, thereby containing the perceived spread of residential development. I consider the proposed extension of development through the Plan Change 13 process is a logical response to the topography provided by the site.
13. The proposed low density residential zone boundary will provide for an edge to residential development which will extend from Beacon Point in the north, through to the Anderson Road area at the western base of Mount Iron. This provides for a 'green belt' (associated with a public walkway) adjacent to the eastern boundary of Wanaka's low density residential development (consistent with Wanaka 2020). The north and east facing land to the east of the Sticky Forest ridgeline (Allenby Farms Ltd and Coastal Land Trust Holding Ltd) generally occurs within a separate visual catchment to the Kirimoko Block and therefore does not need to be considered as part of Plan Change 13.
14. The proposed 'no build' line has been identified to protect elevated and sensitive parts of the site from development. I believe that increased protection of the elevated and sensitive parts of the site would result from a building height restriction plane which extends horizontally from the proposed 'no build' line. A less effective alternative would involve buildings extending immediately adjacent to the proposed 'no build' line. Either option would result in some diffusion of the 'no build' line (diffusion of zone boundaries), as a result of overhanging vegetation and variation in building location and form (roof line, for example), when viewed from most areas. The resource consent process would provide for a site specific assessment of the effect of development adjacent to the 'no build' line.
15. While finer site specific investigation would clarify the location of this line, the broad scale intent of preventing development encroaching on elevated spurs will be effective as a consequence of identifying the 'no build' (landscape sensitivity) line.
16. Submissions have requested that the purpose of the area of open space (no build area) above the low density residential development should be defined more accurately. I understand that the intention of the no-build line is to avoid all buildings or structures. I believe that 'Part 20 – Open Space Zone – Landscape Protection' of the District Plan provides useful guidance for the objectives of the Kirimoko 'open space' area. I also believe some consistency with the Peninsula Bay 'open space landscape protection' zone would be logical.
17. Vegetation such as the existing Douglas fir which are currently spreading on the site have the potential to reduce the openness, naturalness, and the legibility of the landforms. It would therefore be useful to control vegetation so that openness is maintained as well as a consistent (broad) vegetation pattern which acknowledges natural landform. Restricting vegetation to low native species and predominantly tussocks would achieve this outcome. I believe that the 'Pre-European vegetation' species identified in the Lucas report¹ would be a useful guide to specifying appropriate plant species within the 'open space' area. These plant types include the following:
 - Kanuka-Manuka shrublands;
 - Grey shrubland;
 - Tussock (Short, Snow, and Red (in moist areas));

¹ Lucas, Di (January 2006), Kirimoko Proposed Plan Change – Landscape Review. Part 6, page 20.

- Pockets of Beech Forest and/ or mixed Podocarp-broadleaf forest.

This area will require additional, careful design involving consideration of the maintenance of naturalness and openness; view points; and possible node points (for seating and rest areas). As discussed in various submissions, I also believe the continued refining of the structure plan should involve the circulation routes within zones, including tracks for walking and biking, and the distinguishing of these.

18. Co-ordinated (linked) pedestrian and cycling access is proposed to extend from Aubrey Road (Scurr Heights walkway) to the Lake Wanaka Outlet (in association with a 'green belt'). General consistency of altitude of the track (between 330m and 350m) across the Kirimoko Block will improve efficiency of this track and will cater for a wider range of users than a more undulating track. Enabling the track to roughly follow contour lines will reduce the need for earthworks (cut and fill) which have the potential to result in adverse landscape effects.

Comment on Specific Submissions

Barton, David (13/7/1)

19. This submission concerns the alignment of the proposed 'road reserve' area with the boundaries of Lots 2 and 4 so that access to Lot 2 is provided. I believe it is likely that this property boundary would become apparent under the proposed plan change, and that the suggested minor realignment of the 'road reserve' area would not result in adverse landscape effects.

Collie, Stephen (13/15/1-7)

20. This submission suggested that subdivision development is staged or controlled. I do not believe that the scale of development is such that staging is required. Gradual or staged development of individual lots which results in temporary construction effects being dispersed over a number of years (such as has occurred at Lake Hayes Estates and Jacks Point) is common and I would anticipate a similar approach to development within the Kirimoko subdivision. Given that development of individual properties is not proposed in a comprehensive manner, dwellings are likely to display more diversity (and therefore interest) in building design than would otherwise occur.
21. The provision for low density residential development allows for some establishment of vegetation and open space which, in time, will soften the impact of residential development.
22. Further development of the Structure plan will address the proposed road location (and trail head) to Peninsula Bay subdivision.

Crawford, David (13/16/1) and Fitzgerald/ Barton Lot 4 (13/24/1)

23. The originally approved building platforms on Lot 3 and 4 breach the proposed no build line and are within a visually sensitive area near the top of the ridgeline. Approved building platforms are to be removed as part of the plan change process. The proposed no build line has been drawn without acknowledgment of these building platforms. The proposed line approximately follows the 333m contour line through Lots 3 and 4.

Alistair Munro (13/50/1-14)

24. This submission relates to treatment of the eastern boundary. It proposes the following outcomes in response to the identified landscape sensitivity through this area:
 - 10m public walkway adjacent to boundary (Council maintenance and liability).
 - 20m no-build set back (incorporating the walkway).
 - 40m strip of residential sections (no less than 2000m²) adjacent to boundary.
 - 5.5m height restriction on first row of houses (Lot 5 only).
 - Height restriction on trees within 20m no-build set back.

25. As discussed in previous landscape reports the proposal for a 20m 'no build' set back on the eastern boundary, incorporated within a buffer strip of 40m does not provide for the protection of sensitive higher areas along this boundary. It allows building to extend along the eastern boundary (5.5m height at 2000m² densities and set back by 20m), without regard for site topography, and specifically the elevated (and more sensitive) spurs.
26. Restricting the encroachment of development on the spurs which rise to enclose the natural amphitheatre acknowledges the landscape sensitivity which has previously been identified in this part of the site. It should be acknowledged that the naturalness which was once offered by the slope has been degraded, to the extent that it is not pristine, by domestication and built form associated with the Peak View Ridge properties. Despite this, I believe the Peak View Ridge properties are at a density at which they will not dominate the naturalness beyond the proposed 'no build' line when taken in the context of the wider rural landscape.
27. This submission proposes a buffer zone of properties between the sub-urban character of the proposed Low Density Residential zone and increased rural amenity offered by the Rural Residential zone. No building area restriction has been proposed within the suggested 2,000m² buffer area, which would reduce the extent to which expansive buildings dominate the naturalness of the elevated spurs.
28. In addition, the submission does not contain low density residential development to a 'hard edge' as currently proposed. This containment maintains the significant value of views and amenity, which are offered to those Peak View Ridge properties which overlook the site. It accentuates the contrast between the Low Density Residential Zone and the Rural Residential Zone. A broken or 'soft' edge would appear to blend (or amalgamate) development between Peak View Ridge properties with the higher density on the slopes below (within the natural amphitheatre).
29. A walkway above the proposed 'no-build' line would provide potential positive effects including the enhancement of amenity for users of the site and enhance foreground views to the west for those Peak View Ridge properties which overlook the site. Further enhancement of these views would likely result from appropriately designed planting, acknowledging that vegetation such as wilding conifer spread has the potential to reduce openness and detract from naturalness of the elevated spurs.
30. I consider that provision of a well designed public walkway along the open and elevated areas, with visibility to surrounding public and private areas (including visibility to the roading and wider walkway network) provides adequate public security and safety.
31. The suggested 10m public walkway strip follows the boundary, and does not allow the walkway to follow a contour line. This reduces the level of efficiency which is achievable within the suggested no-build area, and does not support the objectives of the plan change which aim to protect the elevated (and more sensitive) spurs.

Dennis Thorn (13/60/1-5)

32. This submission relates to the provision of the Kirimoko 'open space' zone, and includes the protection of the northern ridge line adjacent to the Peninsula Bay block. Following more detailed design of proposed walkways and access points, it is likely that this northern area may be suited to a proposed link road and a main trail head. Such an outcome would restrict the extent to which built form was apparent and detracted from the naturalness of the spur which aligns adjacent to the northern boundary.
33. In regard to the northern boundary, I understand that the previous council Landscape Architect (Rhys Girvan) considered: that the northern ridge line area will be compromised to some degree by approved development within Peninsula Bay; that this part of the site is less sensitive to the extension of Wanaka's urban form than the eastern boundary; and that connecting residential land-use at the base of the more elevated moraine (which rises to the east) provides a logical extension to Wanaka's urban fabric.

34. I believe further design is required in this area which balances the need to protect the spur as an enclosing element of the natural amphitheatre, whilst enhancing connectivity with Peninsula Bay. A link road to Peninsula Bay therefore needs to acknowledge the sensitivity of this part of the site.

CONCLUSION

35. My conclusions are consistent with those of the previous council Landscape Architect (Rhys Girvan). Plan Change 13 proposes a 'no build' line which extends from the Peninsula Bay 'open space landscape protection' zone at the northern boundary, and roughly follows contour lines, before descending slightly along the eastern boundary to protect the elevated (and more sensitive) spurs. This line contains low density residential development within a 'hard edge', whilst providing for an open space (no build) area across the higher, more visually sensitive parts of the site.
36. At a wider scale, this line provides for an eastern boundary to Wanaka's low density residential development which contains the perceived spread of residential development. It also provides for a 'green belt' (associated with a public walkway) adjacent to this boundary.
37. Further design and refinement of the open space (no build) area above the low density residential development should be based on Part 20 – Open Space Zone – Landscape Protection, whilst incorporating the following objectives:
- A building height restriction plane which extends horizontally from the proposed 'no build' line.
 - Protection of the openness, naturalness, and the legibility of the landforms.
 - Avoid buildings and structures.
 - Maintain some consistency with the Peninsula Bay 'open space landscape protection' zone.
 - Control of vegetation so that openness is maintained as well as a consistent (broad sweeping) vegetation pattern which acknowledges natural landform. Predominant use of tussock and low native species would achieve this.
 - Restricting vegetation to the following:
 - Kanuka-Manuka shrublands;
 - Grey shrubland;
 - Tussock (Short, Snow, and Red (in moist areas));
 - Pockets of Beech Forest and/ or mixed Podocarp-broadleaf forest.
 - Promote connectivity through consideration of co-ordinated (linked) pedestrian and cycling access (circulation routes) through the site from Aubrey Road (Scurr Heights walkway) to the Lake Wanaka Outlet. This should cater for a wide range of users by limiting unnecessary variation in altitude, and should consider view points, and possible node points (for seating and rest areas) including the provision for a trail head adjacent to the northern boundary.

Report prepared by



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