

6 Landscapes and Rural Character

6.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide greater detail as to how the landscape, particularly outside urban settlements, will be managed in order to implement the Strategic Objectives and Policies in Chapter 3. This chapter needs to be read with particular reference to the Chapter 3 Strategic Objectives and Policies, which identify the outcomes the policies in this Chapter are seeking to achieve. The relevant Chapter 3 Strategic Objectives and Policies are identified in brackets following each policy.

Landscapes have been categorised to provide greater certainty of their importance to the District, and to respond to regional policy and national legislation. Categorisations of landscapes will provide decision makers with a basis to consider the appropriateness of activities that have adverse effects on those landscapes.

6.1.1 Application of this Chapter

Chapter 1 (Introduction) provides an explanation of the structure of the District Plan including the application of the strategic chapters of the District Plan applying across the Queenstown Lakes District, and the two-volume approach consisting of Volume A and Volume B.

Chapter 3 provides overarching strategic direction for the Queenstown Lakes District. The Chapter 3 Strategic Objectives and Policies are further elaborated on in Chapter 6, which provides more detailed policies for landscapes and rural character. Chapter 6 applies district wide over Volume A and Volume B land, with the application of location specific policies as set out in the chapter. The principal role of Chapters 3 to 6 collectively is to provide direction for the more detailed provisions related to zones and specific topics contained elsewhere in the District Plan.

6.2 Values

The District's landscapes are of significant value to the people who live in, work in or visit the District. The District relies in a large part for its social and economic wellbeing on the quality of the landscape, open spaces and the natural and built environment. Those landscapes also have inherent values, particularly to Tangata Whenua.

The landscapes consist of a variety of landforms created by uplift and glaciations, which include mountains, ice-sculpted rock, scree slopes, moraine, fans, a variety of confined and braided river systems, valley floors and lake basins. These distinct landforms remain easily legible and strong features of the present landscape.

Indigenous vegetation also contributes to the quality of the District's landscapes. While much of the original vegetation has been modified, the colour and texture of indigenous vegetation within these landforms contribute to the distinctive identity of the District's landscapes.

The open space or open character of rural land are key elements of the landscape character that can be vulnerable to degradation from subdivision, development and non-farming activities. The prevalence of large farms and landholdings contributes to the open space and rural working character of the landscape. The predominance of open space over housing and related domestic elements is a strong determinant of the character of the District's rural landscapes.

Some rural areas, particularly those closer to the Queenstown and Wānaka urban areas and within parts of the Wakatipu Basin and Upper Clutha Basin, have an established pattern of housing on smaller landholdings. The landscape character of these areas has been modified by vehicle accesses,

earthworks and vegetation planting for amenity, screening and shelter, which have reduced the open space exhibited by larger scale farming activities.

While acknowledging these rural areas have established rural living and development, and a substantial amount of further subdivision and development has already been approved in these areas, the landscape values of these areas are vulnerable to degradation from further subdivision and development. Areas where rural living development is at or is approaching the finite capacity of the landscape need to be identified if the District's distinctive rural landscape values are to be sustained. Areas where the landscape can accommodate sensitive and sympathetic rural living developments similarly need to be identified.

The lakes and rivers both on their own and, when viewed as part of the distinctive landscape, are a significant element of the national and international identity of the District and provide for a wide range of amenity and recreational opportunities. They are nationally and internationally recognised as part of the reason for the District's importance as a visitor destination, as well as one of the reasons for residents to belong to the area. Managing the landscape and recreational values on the surface of lakes and rivers is an important District Plan function.

Private, commercial and public operators rely on the use, occupation of and access to lakes and rivers for a wide range of activities including recreation, commercial recreation, tourism, transport services and infrastructure. These activities could also include both temporary and permanent structures on the surface, and on the margins, of lakes and rivers.

Activities on the surface of lakes and rivers and their supporting infrastructure can have adverse effects on nature conservation values, landscape values, and navigational and congestion safety (including on other commercial operators and recreational users). New activities also have the potential to adversely affect established activities for example by detracting from the experience enjoyed by the users of existing activities and generating adverse safety effects.

6.3 Policies

6.3.1 Rural Landscape Categorisation

6.3.1.1 Categorise the Rural Zoned landscapes in the District as:

- a. Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF);
- b. Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL);
- c. Rural Character Landscape (RCL)
(SO 3.2.5 and SP 3.3.28, 3.3.32).

6.3.1.2 Exclude identified Ski Area Sub-Zones and the area of the Frankton Arm located to the east of the Outstanding Natural Landscape line as shown on the District Plan web mapping application from the Outstanding Natural Feature, Outstanding Natural Landscape and Rural Character Landscape categories applied to the balance of the Rural Zone and from the policies of this Chapter related to those categories. (SO 3.1B.5 and 3.1B.6).

6.3.1.3 Provide a separate regulatory regime for the Gibbston Valley (identified as the Gibbston Character Zone), Rural Residential Zone, Rural Lifestyle Zone and the Special Zones within which the Outstanding Natural Feature, Outstanding Natural Landscape and Rural Character Landscape categories and the policies of this Chapter related to those categories do not apply unless otherwise stated. (SO 3.1B.5 and 3.1B.6).

6.3.1.4 Provide a separate regulatory regime for the Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone, within which the Outstanding Natural Feature, Outstanding Natural Landscape and Rural

Character Landscape categories and the policies of this Chapter related to those categories do not apply. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.7, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.21 – 3.3.27, 3.3.30, 3.3.31).

- 6.3.1.5 Classify the Open Space and Recreation zoned land located outside the Urban Growth Boundary as Outstanding Natural Landscape, Outstanding Natural Feature or Rural Character Landscape, and provide a separate regulatory framework for the Open Space and Recreation Zones within which the remaining policies of this Chapter do not apply. (SO 3.2.5, 3.2.5.1, 3.5.5.5, 3.2.5.7 and SP 3.3.28, 3.3.30, 3.3.32)
- 6.3.2 **Managing Activities in the Rural Zone, the Gibbston Character Zone, the Rural Residential Zone and the Rural Lifestyle Zone**
- 6.3.2.1 Avoid urban development and subdivision to urban densities in the rural zones. (SO 3.2.2, 3.2.2.1, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.15).
- 6.3.2.2 Ensure that the location and direction of lights does not cause excessive glare and avoids unnecessary degradation of views of the night sky and of landscape character, including of the sense of remoteness where it is an important part of that character. (SO 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.20, 3.3.23, 3.3.30, 3.3.31, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).
- 6.3.2.3 Ensure the District’s distinctive landscapes are not degraded by production forestry planting and harvesting activities. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.7, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.20, 3.3.21, 3.3.27, 3.3.30, 3.3.31, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).
- 6.3.2.4 Enable continuation of the contribution low-intensity pastoral farming in the Rural Zone and viticulture in the Gibbston Character Zone on large landholdings makes to the District’s landscape character. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.7, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.21).
- 6.3.2.5 Avoid indigenous vegetation clearance where it would significantly degrade the visual character and qualities of the District’s distinctive landscapes. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.4, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.30, 3.3.31, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).
- 6.3.2.6 Encourage subdivision and development proposals to promote indigenous biodiversity protection and regeneration where the landscape values and nature conservation values would be maintained or enhanced, particularly where the subdivision or development constitutes a change in the intensity in the land use or the retirement of productive farm land. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.7, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.4, 3.2.4.1 – 3.2.4.7, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.20, 3.3.30, 3.3.31, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).
- 6.3.2.7 Ensure that subdivision and development in the Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Rural Character Landscapes in proximity to an Outstanding Natural Feature or Outstanding Natural Landscape does not compromise the landscape values of that Outstanding Natural Feature or Outstanding Natural Landscape. (SO 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.30, 3.3.31)
- 6.3.2.8 Encourage any landscaping to be ecologically viable and consistent with the established character of the area. (SO 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.5, and SP 3.3.30, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).
- 6.3.3 **Managing Activities on Outstanding Natural Features and in Outstanding Natural Landscapes**

- 6.3.3.1 Recognise that subdivision and development is inappropriate on Outstanding Natural Features or in Outstanding Natural Landscapes unless:
- a. landscape values are protected; and
 - b. in the case of any subdivision or development, all buildings and other structures and all changes to landform or other physical changes to the appearance of land will be reasonably difficult to see from beyond the boundary of the site in question. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.7, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4 and SP 3.3.2, 3.3.23, 3.3.30, 3.3.31)
- 6.3.3.2 Ensure that the protection of Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes includes recognition of any values relating to cultural and historic elements, geological features and matters of cultural and spiritual value to Tangata Whenua, including tōpuni and wāhi tūpuna. (SO 3.2.3, 3.2.3.1, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, 3.2.7.1, and SP 3.3.17, 3.3.23, 3.3.30, 3.3.31, 3.3.43, 3.3.49, 3.3.50, Chapter 5).
- 6.3.3.3 For farming activities within Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes:
- a. Recognise that farming activities may modify the landscape;
 - b. Enable those activities in a way that is consistent with protecting the values of Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes. (3.2.1.7, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.4.1, 3.2.5.1, 3.3.20, 3.3.30).
- 6.3.3.4 The landscape values of Outstanding Natural Landscapes are a significant intrinsic, economic and recreational resource, such that new large scale renewable electricity generation or new large scale mineral extraction development proposals are not likely to be compatible with them. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, and SP 3.3.24, 3.3.30).
- 6.3.3.5 Maintain the open landscape character of Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes where it is open at present. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.7, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, and SP 3.3.2, 3.3.21, 3.3.23, 3.3.30, 3.3.31).
- 6.3.3.6
- a. In relation to proposals for the upgrading (other than minor upgrading) or development of the National Grid, subject to recognising the matters in Policy 30.2.8.2 and having regard to the matters in Policy 30.2.8.2B:
 - i. for those Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes that are Priority Areas protect the landscape values specified in Schedule 21.22; and
 - ii. for Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes whose values are not specified in Schedule 21.22, protect the values identified according to SP 3.3.45.
 - b. Other than for the National Grid and subject to clause c., Regionally Significant Infrastructure is inappropriate on Outstanding Natural Features or in Outstanding Natural Landscapes unless:
 - i. for Priority Areas the landscape values specified in Schedule 21.22 are protected; and

- ii. for Priority Areas and other cases where values are not specified in Schedule 21.22, the values identified according to SP 3.3.45 are protected.
 - c. Other than for the National Grid, if Regionally Significant Infrastructure is in a location where there is insufficient landscape capacity (either specified in Schedule 21.22 or identified in accordance with SP 3.3.45) and functional need or operational need mean another location is not practicable, the Regionally Significant Infrastructure is not inappropriate under clause b. provided that:
 - i. adverse effects are avoided as a priority unless the functional need or operational need make that impracticable;
 - ii. if avoidance of adverse effects is impracticable, those effects are minimised unless the functional need or operational need make that impracticable;
 - iii. insofar as minimisation of any adverse effect is impracticable, that effect is remedied or if that is impracticable, mitigated to the extent practicable.
- 6.3.3.7 In cases where it is demonstrated that regionally significant infrastructure cannot avoid adverse effects on Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features, avoid significant adverse effects and minimise other adverse effects on those landscapes and features. (3.2.1.9, 3.2.5.1, 3.3.25, 3.3.30).

6.3.4 Managing Activities in Rural Character Landscapes

- 6.3.4.1 Recognise that subdivision and development is unsuitable in many locations in Rural Character Landscapes and successful applications will need to be, on balance, consistent with the objectives and policies of the Plan. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.1, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.2, 3.3.22, 3.3.23, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).
- 6.3.4.2 Encourage plan changes applying Rural Lifestyle and Rural Residential Zones to land as the appropriate planning mechanism to provide for any new rural lifestyle and rural residential developments in preference to ad-hoc subdivision and development and ensure these zones are located in areas where the landscape can accommodate the change. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.22, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).
- 6.3.4.3 Require that proposals for subdivision or development for rural living in the Rural Zone:
 - a. take into account all subdivision and development that is in existence or is consented for all land within the relevant landscape character area as at 14 May 2021; and
 - b. assess the potential for adverse cumulative effects on the landscape character of that area and its wider landscape context.
 (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.23, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).
- 6.3.4.4 Have particular regard to the potential adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity values where further subdivision and development would constitute sprawl along roads. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.2, 3.2.2.1, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.23, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).
- 6.3.4.5 Ensure incremental changes from subdivision and development do not degrade landscape character, or important views as a result of activities associated with mitigation of the visual effects of proposed development such as screen planting,

mounding and earthworks. (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.23, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).

- 6.3.4.6 a. In relation to proposals for the upgrading (other than minor upgrading) or development of the National Grid, subject to recognising the matters in Policy 30.2.8.2 and having regard to the matters in Policy 30.2.8.2B:
- i. for Rural Character Landscapes of Priority Areas of the Upper Clutha Basin Rural Character Landscapes maintain the landscape character values and maintain or enhance visual amenity values that are specified in Schedule 21.23; or
 - ii. for Rural Character Landscapes that are not Priority Areas or for which there is no specification in Schedule 21.23, maintain the landscape character values and maintain or enhance visual amenity values identified in accordance with SP 3.3.45;
- b. Other than for the National Grid Regionally Significant Infrastructure within Rural Character Landscapes is to maintain landscape character and maintain or enhance visual amenity values identified in Schedule 21.23 or in accordance with SP 3.3.45 by:
- i. avoiding locations where there is insufficient landscape capacity, in the case of any Priority Area as described in Schedule 21.23 or otherwise as identified following a landscape assessment in accordance with SP3.3.4.5, unless impracticable due to functional need or operational need; or
 - ii. if it is impracticable to avoid any location where there is insufficient landscape capacity due to functional need or operational need, in accordance with clause c.
- c. In those cases where this clause applies, Regionally Significant Infrastructure within Rural Character Landscapes is to maintain landscape character and maintain or enhance visual amenity values by:
- i. avoiding adverse effects on landscape character or visual amenity values, unless impracticable;
 - ii. minimising adverse effects on landscape character or visual amenity values that cannot practicably be avoided;
 - iii. remedying remaining adverse effects on landscape character or visual amenity values as far as practicable; and
 - iv. mitigating to the extent practicable all remaining adverse effects on landscape character or visual amenity values.
- 6.3.4.7 In cases where it is demonstrated that regionally significant infrastructure cannot avoid significant adverse effects on the character of the landscape, such adverse effects shall be minimised. (3.2.1.9, 3.2.5.2, 3.3.25, 3.3.32).
- 6.3.4.8 Avoid adverse effects on visual amenity from subdivision, use and development that:
- a. is highly visible from public places and other places which are frequented by members of the public generally (except any trail as defined in this Plan); or
 - b. forms the foreground for an Outstanding Natural Feature or Outstanding Natural Landscape when viewed from public roads

(SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.23, 3.3.30, 3.3.31, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).

- 6.3.4.9 In the Wakatipu Basin, avoid planting and screening, particularly along roads and boundaries that would degrade openness where such openness is an important part of its landscape character. *(SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.7, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.23, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).*
- 6.3.4.10 In the Upper Clutha Basin, subdivision and development maintains open landscape character where that is the existing character of the Rural Character Landscape. *(SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.7, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.23, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).*
- 6.3.4.11 Encourage development to utilise shared accesses and infrastructure, and to locate within the parts of the site where it will minimise disruption to natural landforms and to rural character. *(SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.7, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.1.9, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.23, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).*

6.3.5 **Managing Activities on Lakes and Rivers**

- 6.3.5.1 Manage the location, intensity and scale of structures on the surface and margins of water bodies including jetties, moorings and infrastructure recognising the functional needs of these activities, and the importance of lakes and rivers, including as a commercial recreation, tourism, transport and recreational resource, and ensure these structures are at a scale or in a location that, as far as practicable:
- a. protects the values of Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes; and
 - b. maintains the landscape character of Rural Character Landscapes and maintains or enhances their visual amenity values.
- (SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.1, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.1.9, 3.2.4, 3.2.4.1, 3.2.4.3, 3.2.4.4, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, 3.2.4.7 and SP 3.3.2, 3.3.20, 3.3.24, 3.3.25, 3.3.30, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).*
- 6.3.5.2 Recognise the character of the Frankton Arm including the established jetties and wharves, and provide for their maintenance, upgrade or expansion. *(SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.9, 3.2.4, 3.2.1.4, 3.2.4.3, 3.2.4.4, 3.2.4.5, 3.2.4.6, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.3, 3.2.5.4, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, 3.2.4.7 and SP 3.3.20, 3.3.24, 3.3.25, 3.3.30).*
- 6.3.5.3 Recognise the urban character of Queenstown Bay and provide for structures and facilities on the surface and margins of Queenstown Bay within the Queenstown Town Centre Waterfront Subzone providing they protect the ability to appreciate the District's distinctive landscapes. *(SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.1, 3.2.1.2, 3.2.1.9, 3.2.4, 3.2.4.1, 3.2.4.3, 3.2.4.4, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, 3.2.4.7, and SP 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.3.20, 3.3.25, 3.3.30).*
- 6.3.5.4 Provide for appropriate commercial and recreational activities on the surface of water bodies that do not involve construction of new structures. *(SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.1, 3.2.4, 3.2.4.3, 3.2.4.4, 3.2.4.5, 3.2.4.6, 3.2.4.7, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.2, 3.2.5.5, 3.2.5.6, and SP 3.3.2, 3.3.30, 3.3.34, 3.3.35).*