

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN-LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of a hearing on submissions to the Proposed Queenstown-Lakes District Plan pursuant to clause 8B of the First Schedule to the Resource Management Act 1991

ON BEHALF OF **GERTRUDE'S SADDLERY LIMITED**
Submitter (#494)
LARCHMONT DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED
Submitter (#527) and (#1281)

EVIDENCE OF BENJAMIN ESPIE
(LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)
9th JUNE 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Benjamin Espie. I reside in Queenstown. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (with honours) from Lincoln University and Bachelor of Arts from Canterbury University. I am a member of the Southern Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and was the Chairman of that branch between 2007 and 2016. Since November 2004 I have been a director of Vivian and Espie Limited, a specialist resource management and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown. Between March 2001 and November 2004 I was employed as Principal of Landscape Architecture by Civic Corporation Limited, a resource management consultancy company contracted to the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**).
- 1.2 The majority of my work involves advising clients regarding the protection of landscapes and amenity that the Resource Management Act 1991 provides and regarding the landscape provisions of various district and regional plans. I also produce assessment reports and evidence in relation to proposed development. The primary objective of these assessments and evidence is to ascertain the effects of proposed development in relation to landscape character and visual amenity.
- 1.3 Much of my experience has involved providing landscape and amenity assessments relating to resource consent applications and plan changes both on behalf of District Councils and private clients. I have compiled many assessment reports and briefs of Environment Court evidence relating to the landscape and amenity related aspects of proposed regimes of District Plan provisions in the rural areas of a number of districts. I have provided Environment Court evidence in relation to the landscape categorisation of various parts of the Wakatipu Basin including the Littles Road and Arthur's Point area. I have provided evidence at QLDC hearing level and Environment Court level in relation to many resource consent applications in the relevant part of the Wakatipu Basin.
- 1.4 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained within the Environment Court Practice Note of November 2014 and agree to comply with it. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on information I have been given by another

person. I confirm that I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed herein.

- 1.5 In preparing this evidence I have reviewed a statement of evidence prepared by Dr Marion Read dated 25 May 2017 (**Dr Read's evidence**).

2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 This evidence is a joint brief in respect of Swan (#494) and Larchmont Properties Limited (**LDL**) (#527 and #1281). I note that the Swan (#494) land has been sold to Gertrude's Saddlery Limited who have taken over the interest in the Swan submission. However, for the purpose of this evidence, I will continue to refer to the land as the "Swan land" and the submission as the "Swan submission". The purpose of this evidence is to assist the Hearings Panel on matters within my expertise of landscape architecture and landscape planning in relation to these submissions.
- 2.2 Mr Vivian has described the land in his evidence. I concur with his evidence that approximately 1.6 hectares of the Swan land is zoned for Low Density Residential Activities (**LDRZ**) with balance 5 hectares within the Rural Zone (**RZ**). I also concur that the LDL land is wholly zoned RZ under the Proposed District Plan (**PDP**).

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 The submissions seek to extend the LDRZ over the relevant land to the line shown on Appendices 1 and 2 of this evidence. This would restrict the LDRZ to the rolling sloping land and would exclude it from the steep sided Shotover Gorge.
- 3.2 The proposed and operative LDRZ boundary is illogical in terms of landscape planning. The landscape character of the area requested to be rezoned is not particularly natural or outstanding in itself. I consider that the zone boundary sought by the submissions (as shown on Appendices 1 and 2) is appropriate in relation to landscape planning principles and will not bring about adverse effects on landscape character.

- 3.3 There will be some visual effects caused by development that would be enabled by the requested LDRZ, however, these will be restricted to relatively small visual catchments.
- 3.4 Dr Read considers that part of the area of requested LDRZ will have adverse effects on the Shotover River corridor. I consider that the more detailed analysis contained within this evidence shows that this will not be the case.

4. RELIEF SOUGHT

- 4.1 As stated above this is a joint brief in relation to the submissions by Swan and LDL. As detailed in Mr. Vivian's evidence the Swan submission seeks a smaller area of land be zoned LDRZ than the LDL submission. All of the land subject to the Swan submission falls within the land subject to the LDL submission. The relief sought by LDL has been amended in that LDL now seeks a slightly smaller extension to the LDRZ as is depicted in Appendices 1 and 2 of this evidence.
- 4.2 For the purpose of this evidence I use the following terms:
- **Operative LDRZ:** The LDRZ of Arthurs Point as per the Operative District Plan (ODP), including 1.6ha of the Swan land.
 - **Proposed LDRZ:** The LDRZ of Arthurs Point as per the PDP, including 1.6ha of the Swan land.
 - **Requested LDRZ:** The LDRZ requested by LDL (which excludes the two small steep areas as is shown on Appendices 1 and 2), including all of the LDRZ requested by Swan.
 - **Subject Site:** All of the Swan and LDL land.

5. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 5.1 Landscape character has been defined as the "*distinct and recognisable pattern of elements in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*"¹.

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (3rd ed, Routledge, Oxford, 2013), page 157.

The elements that give any landscape its character are derived both from nature (geomorphology, ecology, hydrology) and from human interaction (roads, buildings, human land uses, elements that have historical or cultural significance).

- 5.2** The LDL land is 7312m² in area and contains an existing dwelling (number 163 Atley Road), a number of accessory buildings and also an additional partly finished dwelling.
- 5.3** The Swan land is 6.6 hectares and contains three dwellings (numbers 111, 113 and 115 Atley Road) as well as a number of accessory buildings and vehicle tracks.
- 5.4** The operative LDRZ adjacent at Arthur's Point can be seen on Appendices 1 and 2 to this evidence. The southern boundary of the operative LDRZ as it crosses the site has been drawn in a way that does not accurately relate to landform or land use patterns. The southern zone boundary bisects an area of uniformly rolling landform in a way that places the dwellings of 113, 115 and 163 Atley Road within the Rural General Zone (**RGZ**), along with their accessory buildings, gardens, open lawn areas and driveways. Thus, the existing situation provides for suburban development inside the operative LDRZ area (shown on Appendices 1 and 2) and essentially the status quo (i.e. only the existing 113, 115 and 163 Atley Road dwellings, potentially along with rural activities) outside the operative LDRZ.
- 5.5** The operative LDRZ has been developed to near its capacity. Only the small area of operative LDRZ within the subject site has not been subdivided. Consequently, the area of operative LDRZ that can be seen on Appendix 3 has a suburban character, albeit that the southern lots of the zone are currently relatively large. The land of the requested LDRZ that is south of the operative LDRZ accommodates three sizable dwellings², their associated accessory buildings, curtilage and driveways. It also accommodates a dense forest of Douglas fir and larch, which continues down to the waters' edge of the Shotover River. This forest is self-seeded and has grown over the last 50 years.
- 5.6** At approximately the southern boundary of the subject site (more detail can be seen on Appendices 1 and 2), topography drops steeply to the Shotover River in the form of a gorge. This gorge that accommodates this stretch of the Shotover River is relatively complete and cohesive

² The dwellings of 113, 115 and 163 Atley Road.

between the Edith Cavell Bridge and Tucker Beach (if we accept that the flats of Big Beach are within the gorge). Indeed, Section 4.6.1(v)(b) of the ODP states:

Shotover Canyon is defined as that stretch between the Edith Cavell Bridge and Tucker Beach. In two sections, the river is deeply incised into spectacular, narrow, rock gorges separated by a more open river section.

5.7 Presumably, the “more open river section” is Big Beach. The ODP also identifies the Shotover Gorge as an outstanding natural feature (ONF)³.

5.8 I have considered the question of what is the upper extent of the Shotover Gorge on the northern side of the river in this vicinity. The Oxford Dictionary defines gorge as “a narrow valley between hills or mountains, typically with steep rocky walls and a stream running through it”⁴ and notes the origin of the noun as an Old French term for “throat”. On Appendices 1 and 2 I show a dashed line marking the upper extent of the extremely steep rocky walls that contain the Shotover in this vicinity. There is some merit in the argument that this line is the upper extent of the Shotover Gorge, since:

- in the truest sense, this is the extent of the steep rocky walls that contain the river;
- if this was to be the upper extent of the ONF then this would have some symmetry with the situation on the opposite (western) side of the river where Gorge Road sits at this level and marks the bottom edge of the operative and proposed LDRZ (as can be seen on Appendices 1 and 2).

5.9 However, ultimately, I consider that this would be to take too narrow (no pun intended) or “zoomed-in” a view. If we are to consider the Shotover Gorge (or gorges) as running from the Edith Cavell Bridge to Tucker Beach, then it is relevant that:

- Except for the stretch between Edith Cavell Bridge and the southern end of McChesney Road, the river is not contained by short, almost vertical walls (as can be seen on Appendix 3). The valley that contains the river is somewhat broader, higher and of a larger scale, although still a cohesive, recognisable gorge;

³ ODP, Section 4.2.5, Objective 5(a).

⁴ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/>

- The slopes above the dashed line on Appendices 1 and 2 are still particularly steep and (despite wilding exotic tree cover) in some places, rocky. They are still part of a narrow valley.
- Between Edith Cavell Bridge and the southern end of McChesney Road, Gorge Road has been cut into a steep slope and the land above it zoned and used for residential development. Prior to the road and development appearing, what is legible as the gorge on the western side of the river may have continued significantly higher than currently;
- In the vicinity of Mathias Terrace, Larkins Way and the LDRZ in that area, the upper extent of the gorge is clearly at the LDRZ boundary (as can be seen on Appendix 3). This is also the case as one moves north past Stables Place and on to the Arthur's Point Rural Visitor Zone. Looking at landform over this broader area, the gorge is clearly a larger scale landform than the narrow section between Edith Cavell Bridge and the southern end of McChesney Road.

5.10 Appendix 4 of this evidence is a photograph of the Arthur's Point area taken from near the top of Sugar Loaf above Watties Track. I understand this photograph was taken in 1960. It shows the vicinity of the subject site to be improved farm paddocks, most likely used for wintering stock. While fences cannot be seen on the subject site, a clear edge to the improved paddocks is evident. As would be expected, this edge relates closely to landform, the terrace lands being used as pasture and the gorge being left unmanaged. Appendix A of Peter Nicholson's geotechnical assessment report (which is appended to is evidence) is a site plan prepared from a geotechnical perspective. It shows a line marking the edge of the bluffs or steep slopes that descend to the Shotover. This line corresponds with the edge of the improved paddocks that can be seen on the Appendix 4 photograph and also corresponds with a line of landform that can be seen in the contours of Appendices 1 and 2.

5.11 Overall, if we consider the area between Edith Cavell Bridge and Tucker Beach, I consider that the upper extent of the gorge as it passes through the subject site is the line shown on Appendices 1 and 2.

- 5.12** Irrespective of the ONF of the Gorge, the ODP categorises all of the RGZ land between Littles Road and Queenstown as outstanding natural landscape (**ONL**). This landscape categorisation is the result of Environment Court decisions that considered extensive evidence on the landscape categorisation of the Wakatipu Basin and the district in general⁵. These Court decisions regarding landscape categorisation were made with the existing zoning already in place and the findings of these decisions were adopted as part of the ODP. The result is that Arthur's Point is essentially an island of development zoning (LDRZ and RVZ) surrounded by a mountainous landscape that has a high degree of natural character when considered as a whole. It is important to note that the Environment Court hearings that led to these decisions (and the evidence that was heard) did not examine the Arthur's Point area in any detail; they simply used the already existing zone boundaries as the ONL boundary. For this reason, no ONL boundary lines are shown on Appendix 8A of the ODP in the Arthur's Point area.
- 5.13** As has been discussed, and with reference to Appendix 3, it is clear that some of the zone boundaries have been drawn arbitrarily in a way that does not relate to landform (particularly the northern edge of the LDRZ and RVZ north of Arthur's Point Road, the eastern and southern edges of the RVZ and, in my opinion, the southern edge of the LDRZ as it crosses the subject site). I consider that if we examine the vicinity of the subject site in detail, it is clear that the existing zone boundary is not a line between two landscapes, nor is it a line that marks the boundary of the feature of the river gorge. The land between the operative LDRZ boundary and the edge of the gorge that I show on my Appendices 1 and 2 accommodates three dwellings, accessory buildings, associated curtilage and driveways. It is otherwise covered in self-seeded exotic trees. It is of rolling, sloping topography and, prior to tree infestation, was used as improved pasture. I consider that this land is not correctly categorised as being part of an ONL; there is no change in character between the land that is inside the operative LDRZ and the land that is outside the operative LDRZ. I consider that the landscape category boundary should be drawn at the line where there is a distinct change in landscape character. As discussed above, I consider that this occurs at the lip of the Shotover Gorge as shown on my Appendices 1 and 2.
- 5.14** Therefore, in summary, I consider that the existing landscape character of the relevant vicinity (taking into account what is provided for by operative zoning) consists of a pattern made up of the following elements:

⁵ Environment Court decisions C180/1999, Wakatipu Environmental Society vs. Q.L.D.C. and C3/2002 Wakatipu Environmental Society vs. Q.L.D.C.

- The Shotover Gorge between Edith Cavell Bridge and Tucker Beach. This is a wild, rugged, natural and scenic gorge and its upper extent in the vicinity of the subject site is marked by the line shown on Appendices 1 and 2.
- The suburban settlement of Arthur's Point extending generally to the edges of the existing LDRZ and RVZ.
- The mountainous, natural landscape that surrounds Arthur's Point to the north and west, and that continues south to Queenstown; however, the southern and eastern edges of Arthur's Point settlement abut the Shotover gorge, not this surrounding landscape.

5.15 In relation to the interaction of these elements, I consider that the zone boundaries of the proposed and operative LDRZ and RVZ could, in some places, be drawn more carefully and appropriately so as to accord with landform lines and other natural patterns and to provide visual logic to the pattern of built development that ultimately emerges. I will discuss this further below.

EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

5.16 Landscape character effects are the effects that an activity may have on the landscape as a resource in its own right; effects on the patterns and processes that make up the landscape, rather than effects relating to views or visibility.

5.17 When describing effects, I will use the following hierarchy of adjectives:

- Nil or negligible;
- Slight;
- Moderate;
- Substantial;
- Severe.

5.18 The requested LDRZ extends the zone boundary to the south so as to take in most of the subject site. The requested RZ takes in all of the steep land that falls towards the river; i.e. all of the land that is within the Shotover Gorge. The ultimate result provided for will be that suburban development can extend over the requested LDRZ area. The block of land that wraps round the

subject site to the south, east and west is public land administered by DOC and (like much of the subject site) is covered in self-seeded trees.

- 5.19** As has been broadly discussed above, I consider that the proposed and operative LDRZ boundary as it crosses the subject site (as can be seen on Appendices 1 and 2) lacks any logic in relation to landscape patterns. The land between the operative/proposed LDRZ boundary and the requested LDRZ boundary can be seen on Appendices 1 and 2 and accommodates a number of buildings, driveways and lawn areas. The operative and proposed LDRZ boundary does not represent any line of landscape character change, as is most evident on Appendix 2. The land above the requested LDRZ boundary is not outstanding or natural in itself. Nor does it contribute to the qualities that make the broader mountainous landscape an ONL.
- 5.20** Existing dwellings on lots to the west of the site (Numbers 102, 104, 106 and 119 Atley Road – shown on Appendix 2) are at a relatively low altitude (approximately 405masl as per Appendix 1) these dwellings practically sit of the lip of the Shotover Gorge. The line marking the upper extent of the gorge that I show on Appendices 1 and 2 is not a line of altitude, it is a line of landform. It marks a gradient change where the rolling topography changes to a falling escarpment landform. Consequently, the requested LDRZ boundary line as it crosses the subject site ranges between 405masl (close to the boundary of 119 Atley Road) and 440masl (close to the boundary of 163 Atley Road).
- 5.21** Due to all of the above, I do not consider that an adverse landscape character effect that is more than negligible will result from the requested zoning. A logical and appropriate pattern of land uses and elements will be evident in which the Shotover Gorge is preserved, the suburban area has a logical and appropriate boundary that relates to landform, and the broader mountainous ONL has its important qualities preserved.

6. VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY

- 6.1** Observers that have the potential to have their views or visual amenity affected by the requested LDRZ can be categorised as follows:
- Observers in the existing LDRZ adjacent to the subject site;
 - Observers in the McChesney Road part of Arthur's Point;

- Observers on or adjacent to Watties Track;
- Observers on Gorge Road;
- Observers on the Shotover River.

6.2 I will discuss each of these groups in turn, examining existing views and visual amenity and the effects of the requested LDRZ. I understand that no further submissions (Apart from #1281) were received from any nearby residents in relation to Submissions #494 or #527.

OBSERVERS IN THE OPERATIVE LDRZ ADJACENT TO THE SUBJECT SITE

6.3 The central northern part of the subject site that is adjacent to existing lots within the operative LDRZ is also already contained within the proposed LDRZ. Thus, new development within the site that would be enabled by the requested LDRZ would be located adjacent to land that is already owned by the submitters; no other neighbours would be immediately affected.

6.4 The eastern part of the subject site comprises the Murphy land (number 163 Atley Road - Lot 2 DP398656), which takes the form of an elevated terrace. This property contains an existing dwelling, a number of accessory buildings and also an additional partly finished dwelling. Effectively, the existing buildings on this property fill its buildable area. While the property could potentially be filled with built form in a different configuration under the requested LDRZ, it seems that the amount of built form could not increase much in a practical sense. Given its elevated position, existing (and consented) built form within this property would be visible from much of the Mathias Terrace / Atley Road residential area if the existing trees covering the property were removed. The buildings would be seen in a locally elevated position to the south of the existing residential area. As mentioned, the requested situation may lead to a reconfiguration of built form within this property. Visual appearance may change. However, given the existing built form within this property, I do not consider that the requested LDRZ will lead to any significantly increased visual effects.

6.5 The property at number 119 Atley Road (Lot 1 DP25637) is partially adjacent to a flat area at the western extreme of the subject site that could accommodate built development under the requested LDRZ. There would be some visual effect on this neighbour, perhaps mostly when travelling to and from their property. The occupiers of this property would no longer have the experience of being on the edge of a suburban area (as they currently do), they would have the

visual experience of being within suburbia. Notwithstanding that, this property would retain its dramatic outlook to the southwest, west and northwest, over the Shotover Gorge.

- 6.6** In general terms, the requested LDRZ will lead to suburban development to the south of the operative/proposed LDRZ and the newly enabled suburban development will be visually screened or buffered by development that is already enabled by the operative/proposed LDRZ. Due to topography, only a small amount of the newly enabled development would be visible from the operative/proposed LDRZ. The main views that are available from the properties of the operative/proposed LDRZ are oriented to the west (to Bowen Peak), the north and northeast (to Mount Dewar and Coronet Peak) and to the east (over Big Beach and towards Malaghans Ridge), rather than to the south.

OBSERVERS IN THE MCCHESENEY ROAD PART OF ARTHUR'S POINT

- 6.7** The older part of Arthur's Point sits on the lower slopes of a bluff of Bowen Peak between Domestic Creek and McChesney Creek. This residential neighbourhood consists of rows of dwellings stepping down the slope, generally accessed via McChesney and McMillan Roads. These elevated sites often gain long views to the northeast, over the Atley Road area, to the Malaghans Road valley and Coronet Peak. These sites are often higher in elevation than the subject site and hence gain something of a bird's-eye-view. Views from individual dwellings vary considerably due to topography and the frequent presence of large trees and nearby buildings, however a number of buildings within this neighbourhood gain long views as described that take in the subject site at distances in the order of 350 to 500 metres. An indication of these views can be gained by looking at Photograph 1 of Appendix 5.
- 6.8** The subject site currently largely appears as a broad area of rolling forest. It is a relatively prominent mid-ground element, depending upon the individual viewpoint of the observer, and it is backed by the slopes of Sugar Loaf / Queenstown Hill and by Malaghans Ridge. More distant mountain slopes form the backdrop. Existing dwellings of the properties to the northwest of the subject site can be seen in these views (100 to 108 and 119 Atley Road), although existing trees partially screen them. Some areas of built form on the lots to the north of the subject site (i.e. the Mathias Terrace area) can be seen but again, trees sometimes screen them.
- 6.9** In these existing views, the trees of the subject site are an important factor; they screen much of the existing built form within the site and give the site the appearance of a forest. As mentioned,

these trees are self-seeded Douglas fir and larch. I understand that they could be cleared as a permitted activity. If this was to be done the site would look very different; much more built form would be seen than is currently the case; including that which is unbuilt but is enabled by existing zoning. The site would appear much more open and human modification (buildings, roads, outdoor activities) would be much more evident.

- 6.10** If we consider the requested LDRZ from these viewpoints, then this would represent more human modification again. Most of the forested rolling landform that can be seen in Photograph 1 would accommodate suburban development. The lowest parts of the forested landform in that photograph are below the requested LDRZ boundary line which runs horizontally in that view, at the level of the existing dwelling on the 119 Atley Road property. For observers in the McChesney Road area, I consider that this would represent an adverse effect in relation to views and visual amenity. Part of the midground of their northern views will become considerably less green and natural than it currently is and it will be characterised by human activity. The overall composition of these views will still be dominated by the open and natural surrounding mountain slopes and by the more distant background slopes and peaks but the views will lose some naturalness and tranquillity. This adverse effect is mitigated by the fact that the very steep slopes of the gorge itself will remain natural and by the fact that, even under the existing zoning, the views could become less natural if the existing trees on the subject site were felled and if the operative/proposed LRDZ was developed to capacity. Overall, I consider the degree of effect on these viewers is best described as moderate.

OBSERVERS ON OR ADJACENT TO WATTIES TRACK

- 6.11** Watties Track is a short (1 kilometre) dead-end road off Gorge Road that accesses four rural dwellings. The owners and users of these dwellings are practically the only users of Watties Track. Views from Watties Track and the associated dwellings are both up (east) and down (north) the Shotover River and to the mountain slopes and skylines of Bowen and Coronet Peaks.
- 6.12** As can be seen from Photograph 2 of Appendix 5, the subject site is directly across the river from Watties Track. Existing built form within the McChesney Road area of Arthur's Point can be seen on the left. The site itself extends very approximately half way down the hill-form that is in the central part of the view shown in Photograph 2 (the lower half of the slopes being the DOC land). Again, I understand that the existing situation includes the ability to remove the trees from the

subject site. If this was done, the existing and consented built form on the LDL land would be plainly visible, as would at least two of the dwellings on the Swan land, and all associated driveways etc.

- 6.13** Under the requested LDRZ, much of the (approximately) upper half of the forested landform seen in Photograph 2 would accommodate suburban development. The lower parts of the landform would remain in their current state. For observers on Watties Track and the associated properties, I consider that this would again represent an adverse effect in relation to views and visual amenity. An important and prominent part of current views would become much less natural than it currently is. The wild and scenic character of the river gorge (which itself would remain unchanged) would contrast with the suburban pattern on the upper slopes. The river gorge and the open, natural mountain slopes to the left and right in these views would mean that the scenic rural setting that an observer experiences would not be lost but the close and expansive suburban development would become a prominent part of the composition of these views in a way that competes with natural character. Overall, I consider that for the particular observers that experience these views from Watties Track, the effect on views and visual amenity will be of a substantial degree.

OBSERVERS ON GORGE ROAD

- 6.14** The parts of Gorge Road from which the subject site is visible are shown on Appendix 3. From the parts of Gorge Road that are south of Watties Track, the visibility of the subject site that is available takes the form of glimpses. The land of the subject site is not prominent and is at times screened by foreground elements. The subject site is a small and distant part of a complex visual scene. I consider that, while a line of sight to development within the site will be intermittently available from these parts of Gorge Road, I consider that it will be relatively difficult to notice for most observers and will not significantly alter the visual experience of landscape that is currently had.
- 6.15** Between Watties Track and the McChesney Creek Bridge, a Gorge Road user again experiences intermittent glimpses to the subject site but the glimpses are at shorter distances (between 500 and 300 metres). For the second half of this short stretch of Gorge Road existing development in the McChesney Road area is evident and hence a road user is aware that they are entering a settlement. Glimpses of development on the subject site will heighten this awareness of a

settlement but will not fundamentally alter the quality of views or the type of visual experience that a road user experiences in my opinion. Visual amenity will not be degraded.

6.16 Between the McChesney Creek Bridge and the McChesney Road intersection, a Gorge Road user experiences plain visibility to the subject site as is shown on Photograph 3 of Appendix 5. The site appears as part of a forested hill landform. These views are similar to those from the McChesney Road neighbourhood described above, although the viewer is at a lower elevation. Again, if the existing trees of the subject site were removed, existing human modifications, including buildings, would be evident. A viewer on this stretch of road is immediately adjacent to the McChesney Road area of Arthur's Point and development on that side of Gorge Road is plainly visible. The currently vacant site of the Arthur's Point Tavern is within the LDRZ and is immediately adjacent to Gorge Road as well as being at the same level. A user of this stretch of road is fully aware that they are within a settled residential area. I therefore consider that, while the requested LDRZ would change the view to the northeast from this stretch of road, this would not alter a particularly high-quality or memorable view and would not introduce built development to a visual amenity experience that currently excludes it. I do not consider that the landscape experience of a user of this stretch or Gorge Road would be significantly reduced in quality.

6.17 As a Gorge Road user crosses the Edith Cavell Bridge, views down the Shotover are available. There may be some glimpses to the very westernmost part of the subject site in these views but the subject site is almost entirely screened by the LDRZ lots to its northwest (i.e. 100 to 108 Atley Road), which already accommodate development. Any glimpses of built development in these views that would be brought about by the requested LDRZ would be insignificant in terms of the composition of views.

OBSERVERS ON THE SHOTOVER RIVER

6.18 I have not visited the relevant stretch of the Shotover River for the purpose of viewing the subject site. As mentioned, the relevant stretch of the river is used exclusively by Shotover Jet Ltd. I have walked the requested zone boundary line on site and have considered the potential height of buildings in relation to views from the river.

6.19 In a worst case scenario, the requested LDRZ would allow buildings to be erected within two metres of the outer boundary of the site. With reference to Appendices 1 and 2, this outer

boundary is generally well inside the edge of the Shotover Gorge; i.e. built form will not sit right on the lip of the gorge, it will generally be between 6 and 30 metres back from the lip.

- 6.20** The existing dwellings on the 102, 104, 106 and 119 Atley Road properties are close to the lip of the gorge. In my understanding, these buildings are partially visible from a northwest to southeast stretch of the Shotover River that runs adjacent to the Oxenbridge Tunnel. Upstream of the Edith Cavell Bridge. From this stretch of river, many buildings can be seen including the Shotover Jet base facilities. There may be some slight visibility of buildings within the requested LDRZ at the western extreme of the site in these vies but new buildings would be considerably less visible than the existing ones.
- 6.21** As a river user travels downstream from Edith Cavell Bridge, I consider that there will be no visibility of buildings enabled by the requested LDRZ until a river user is east of the subject site near Big Beach. From the southern part of the Big Beach area, there may be some brief views to parts of buildings near the southeastern corner of the subject site. Once a viewer gets to the northern or eastern end of Big Beach, there will be some visibility of built form at the eastern end of the subject site. From these locations, existing buildings within the Larkins Bay and Amber Close area of Arthur's Point are easily visible. Once a river user reaches the eastern end of Big Beach and beyond, visibility of the site is lost.
- 6.22** In summary, the requested LDRZ will add some slight visibility of built form to a river user's experience, but only when that river user is at viewpoints from which buildings can already be seen. The additional visibility will be particularly slight; certainly of a lesser degree than existing visibility of buildings. Overall, I consider that a river user's visual experience will be degraded to a negligible degree.

7. DR READ'S EVIDENCE

7.1 Dr Read discusses Submissions 494 and 572 at paragraphs 9.17 to 9.20 of her evidence. A summary of her findings is:

- With reference to the knoll within the LDL property that can be seen on Appendix 1; *"In my opinion development would need to be kept to the north of the summit of this knoll*

so that it did not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the river corridor. Consequently, I consider that locating the zone boundary along the southern border of Lot 2 DP398656 [the LDL land] to be too far south. The more northern reaches could be rezoned, however, and developed in accordance with the LDR without significant adverse effect. Submission 527 requests that the border of the LDR zone be located at the boundary of the neighbouring property [the Swan land]. This is downslope towards the river to both the northeast and south and consequently I do not consider that this would avoid adverse effects on the river corridor”.

- In relation to the part of the subject site to the north driveway that can be seen on Appendices 1 and 2; *“this driveway is located on land sloping down to the southeast and the river corridor. I consider that this location is too far to the east to ensure that adverse effects on the river corridor would not occur. The more westerly land, however, could absorb LDR development without significant effects”.*

7.2 Dr Read appears to be suggesting that only a small part of the subject site can appropriately be rezoned and that the parts of the subject site that fall to the south and/or east cannot absorb development since such development would not avoid adverse effects on the river corridor.

7.3 Dr Read has not had the benefit of the detailed contour information and analysis set out in this evidence. I consider that the information set out in this evidence shows that:

- the requested LDRZ does not encroach into the river corridor and is separated from it. The land on which requested LDRZ is located is topographically distinct from the river corridor, is covered in wilding trees and was previously improved pasture land.
- Development enabled by the requested LDRZ will be no closer to the lip of the Shotover Gorge than existing development at the end of Atley Road and in the Larkins Way / Amber Close area.
- Visual effects as experienced from the river corridor will be absolutely minimal.

7.4 Consequently, I consider that the requested situation will not adversely affect the ONF river corridor.

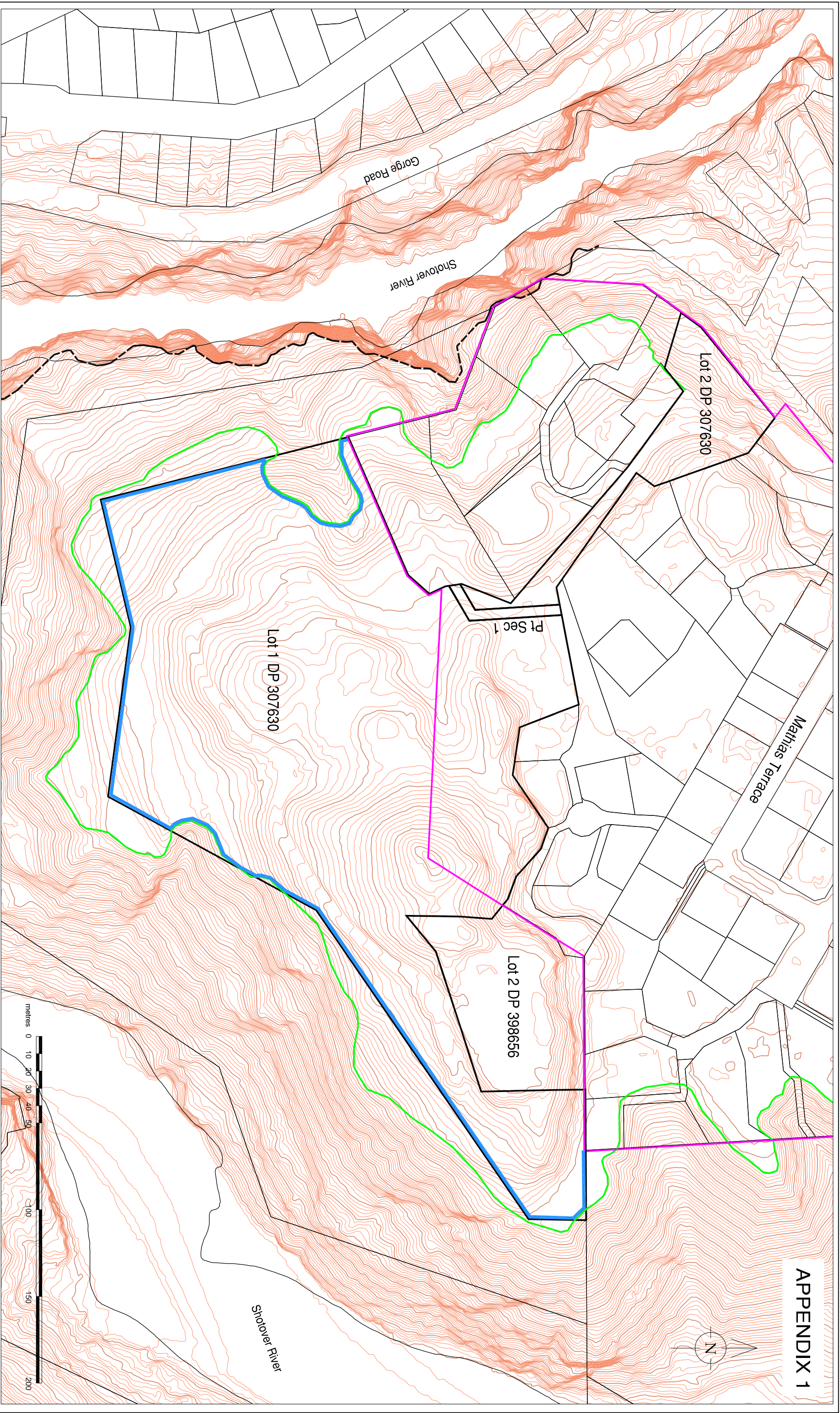
8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The land of the subject site that is south of the operative/proposed LDRZ accommodates three dwellings, accessory buildings, associated curtilage and driveways. It is otherwise covered in self-seeded exotic trees. It is of rolling, sloping topography and, prior to tree infestation, was used as improved pasture.
- 8.2 The Shotover Gorge wraps around the subject site to its south. The upper extent of the Shotover Gorge in the vicinity of the subject site is the line marked on Appendices 1 and 2 of this evidence.
- 8.3 The operative/proposed zone boundaries of the Arthur's Point LDRZ have been drawn in a way that does not accurately correspond with landform or other landscape patterns. I consider that zone boundaries should be drawn carefully and appropriately so as to, where possible, accord with landscape lines or other natural patterns. This will give more visual logic to the pattern of built form that ultimately emerges.
- 8.4 In relation to landscape categorisation, the vicinity of the subject site has not been examined in detail by any past assessments. I consider that the part of the subject site that is outside of the Shotover Gorge is not part of an ONL. Its landscape character is significantly modified and is not particularly natural.
- 8.5 I do not consider that an adverse landscape character effect that is more than negligible will result from the requested LDRZ. A logical and appropriate pattern of land uses and elements will be evident in which the Shotover Gorge is preserved, the suburban area has a logical and appropriate boundary that relates to landform, and the broader mountainous ONL has its important qualities preserved.
- 8.6 I consider that the requested LDRZ will have the following effects on views and visual amenity:
- A negligible effect on observers within the operative/proposed LDRZ to the north of the subject site. Development that is already enabled by operative/proposed zoning will largely screen newly enabled development.

- A moderate adverse effect on observers in the higher parts of old Arthur's Point (the McChesney Road area). The mid ground of these views will lose some naturalness and tranquillity. The overall composition of these views will continue to be dominated by the open and natural surrounding mountain slopes and by more distant peaks and skylines.
- A substantial adverse effect on observers in the Watties Track area. A prominent part of current views would become considerably less natural than under the operative/proposed LDRZ situation. The river gorge would retain wild and natural scenic qualities.
- A negligible to slight effect on Gorge Road users. Travellers on a relatively short stretch of Gorge Road will have plain visibility to development enabled by the requested LDRZ but a user of this stretch of road currently has the visual experience of being within a settled residential area with considerable development close to them.
- A negligible effect on users of the Shotover River corridor. Visibility of newly enabled built form will be difficult and will be in conjunction with visibility of existing development.

ATTACHED APPENDICES

- 1 A PLAN OF THE SITE AND ITS IMMEDIATE CONTEXT SHOWING THE REQUESTED SITUATION
- 2 AN AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SITE AND ITS IMMEDIATE CONTEXT SHOWING THE REQUESTED SITUATION
- 3 A PLAN SHOWING THE BROADER CONTEXT OF THE SITE
- 4 PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SITE AND ITS IMMEDIATE VICINITY FROM SUGARLOAF
- 5 PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SUBJECT SITE



Legend

- Requested Low Density Residential Zone Boundary
- Operative/PDP Low Density Residential Zone Boundary
- Top of River Cliff
- - - Edge of the Shotover Gorge

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Note: All areas and dimensions are subject to survey

Note: Aerial Image & contours from QLDC Information

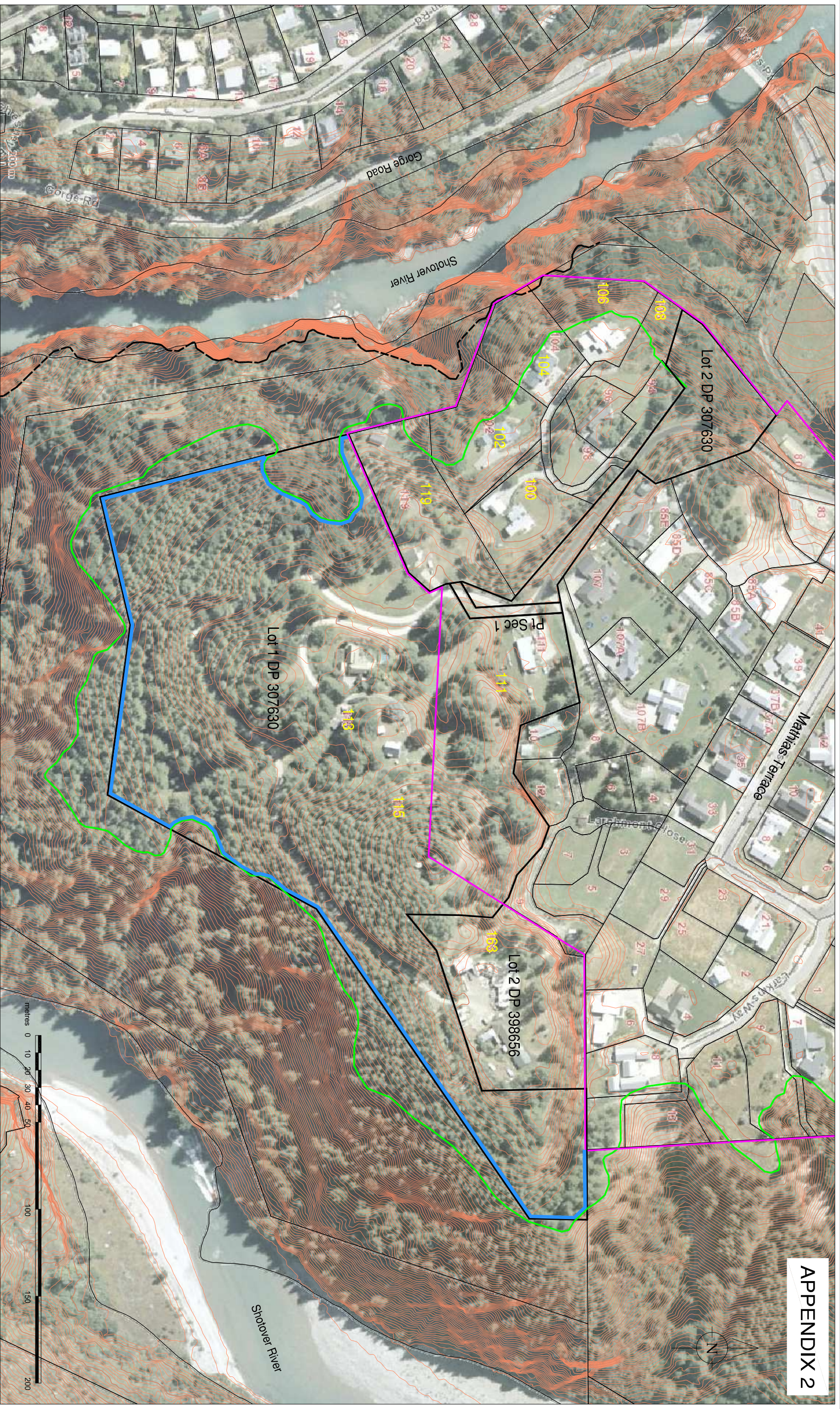
Note: Not all easements are shown

Note: Contour Interval is 1.0m

PROPOSED ZONE CHANGE
ARTHURS POINT
FOR GERTRUDE'S SADDLERY LTD

DATE: 8 June 2017
 BY: B McLeod
 Scale **1:2000**
 Original Plan A3
 DRAWING & ISSUE NO. **4462-3R-1A**

PO Box 2493
 Wakatipu 9349
 Ph 03 442 3466
 Fax 03 442 3469
 Email admin@ascd.co.nz



Legend

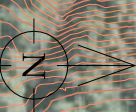
- Requested Low Density Residential Zone Boundary
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Note: Aerial Image & contours from QLDC Information

Note: Not all easements are shown

Note: Contour Interval is 1.0m



PROPOSED ZONE CHANGE
LOTS 1 & 2 DP 307630 & Pt Sec 1 SO 24074
ARTHURS POINT
FOR GERTRUDE'S SADDLERY LTD

DATE: 8 June 2017	Scale 1:2000
BY: B McLeod	Original Plan A3
AURUM SURVEY	
PO Box 2493 Wakatipu 9349 Ph 03 442 3466 Fax 03 442 3469 Email admin@ascl.co.nz	
DRAWING & ISSUE NO. 4462-3R-2A	

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ESPIE APPENDIX 3 – OPERATIVE/PROPOSED AND REQUESTED ZONING WITHIN THE ARTHUR'S POINT AREA AND PHOTOGRAPH LOCATIONS

Orange outlines indicate the extent of the operative/proposed Low Density Residential Zone. The orange dashed line indicates the extent of the requested zone extension. The yellow lines indicate stretches of Gorge Road from which there is an intermittent line of sight to the requested zoning area. Locations from which photographs have been taken are indicated by a red number.



Arthur's Point + Sholover River from Riv. G.H.D. Series. 49.



Photograph 1: from the part of Moonlight Track that is formed as a road. The summit of the mid-ground hill covered in golden coloured larches is on the southern boundary of the operative/proposed LDRZ.



Photograph 2: from Watties Track.



Photograph 3: from Gorge Road adjacent to the Arthur's Point bus stop.

APPENDIX 5: PHOTOGRAPHS