

**BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT  
HEARINGS PANEL**

**UNDER**  
the Resource Management Act 1991

**IN THE MATTER OF**  
Queenstown Lakes Proposed District  
Plan – Stage 1, Chapter 23 Gibbston  
Character Zone and Planning Maps  
(13 and 31)

**SUBMITTERS**  
Gibbston Station Limited (GS Ltd)

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STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF NIKKI SMETHAM  
ON BEHALF OF GIBBSTON VALLEY STATION LIMITED

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**DATED:** 12 June 2017

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. My full name is Nikki Smetham. I am a Landscape Architect employed by Rough and Milne Landscape Architects Limited.
2. My qualifications are a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Inc., and I am a member of the Resource Management Law Association of New Zealand Inc.
3. I have 18 years' experience as a landscape architect and for approximately the last 12 years I have specialised in landscape assessment work. This has included undertaking landscape and visual effects assessments associated with a wide variety of development proposals throughout New Zealand.
4. I have resided in Christchurch for most of my life. I have worked on a number of projects in Queenstown in my capacity as a Landscape Architect and have visited Queenstown Lakes District over the years for both personal and professional reasons. My latest visit to Queenstown was in May this year.
5. In the course of preparing my evidence I have considered the following:
  - The Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan (PDP)
  - Chapters 3 - Strategic Direction, 6 - Landscape and 23 - Gibbston Character Zone
  - Section 42A Report on Chapter 23 Rural Gibbston Character Zone
  - Evidence of Marion Read on Chapter 23, 6 April 2016
6. 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**

7. My evidence is presented on behalf of Gibbston Valley Station Limited (GVSL) who own Gibbston Valley Station (GVS). The station occupies the valley floor on the southern side of the Kawarau River, the steep north facing hill slopes and high back country. Part of the station

is within the Gibbston Character Zone and extends over the valley floor on both sides of the Gibbston Highway (SH6) which traverses east - west along the valley. The balance of the station is within the Rural Zone categorised as part of an ONL.

8. My evidence is focused on the (appropriateness) of the proposed Gibbston Valley Subzone (SZ) for GVS, which for the most part, is within the Gibbston Character Zone (GCZ). The SZ is proposed to enable a holistic and comprehensive development of the GVS satisfying the purpose of the zone, while addressing a change in focus arising from visitor and economic demands.
9. I also comment on the landscape-related goals, objectives, policies, rules and assessment matters of Chapters 3, 6 and 23 of the PDP where appropriate. I have been asked to look at these and consider whether the provisions relating to the Gibbston Valley Subzone landscape will result in appropriate landscape outcomes.
10. The structure of my evidence is set out below as follows:
  - Statutory framework
  - The existing environment including the consented development
  - The proposed development
  - Landscape assessment of the development enabled by the SZ
  - Assessment against relevant statutory and policy documents
  - Conclusion
11. An A3 Graphic Attachment, Sheets 1 – 9, is provided in support of my evidence and includes maps, aerials and photographs illustrating the GVS, the Structure Plan, which sets out the activity areas anticipated by the SZ and a plan showing the areas of consented development.

## **STATUTORY FRAMEWORK**

12. The District's landscapes and natural environment are widely recognised and valued as an important resource in the Queenstown Lakes District (QLD) for farming, tourism, recreation, a place to live, work and play.

13. The PDP continues to manage the land resource through zoning and landscape classification. These are accepted methods to geographically delineate those areas to which objectives, policies and rules apply and whether certain effects, activities or uses are acceptable or not.

14. The Gibbston Character Zone sets out the purpose for the zone as being:

*to provide primarily for viticulture and commercial activities with an affiliation to viticulture within the confined space of the Gibbston Valley*

15. The recognition of Gibbston as an acclaimed wine producing area forms the basis for the Gibbston Valley Subzone provisions. At issue is the potential of residential subdivision and development to degrade the distinctive character and create conflict with established and anticipated intensive viticultural activities. There is however, an increasing realisation that not all of the valley land is suitable for viticulture and this means that the economic driver behind the anticipated landscape character is compromised. This has prompted the proposed Gibbston Valley Subzone, which will enable a broader approach to rural activities and support other non-rural activities in appropriate locations, while maintaining the presence of viticultural activity in Gibbston.

16. The appropriateness of activities, the absorption capacity of the landscape and effects of the proposed subzone development are determined by identifying whether the landscape character of Gibbston will be maintained.

17. The PDP places a strong emphasis on viticulture farming to maintain the Gibbston character. More particularly, there is an emphasis on a productive regime to maintain the character values attributed to this particular landscape. These productive activities contribute to a rural character but are not its sole determinant. The ancillary activities also contribute to the existing Gibbston valley character.

18. The landscape is currently in a state of change as a range of tourism and recreational activities are gradually replacing traditional farming activities. In my view, this is an acceptable and expected process that, in principle, does not pose a significant threat to the Gibbston character provided that the PDP provisions and zoning appropriately reflects current uses, recognise future potential and enable appropriate development, while protecting the landscape values relating to the Gibbston landscape.

## THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT INCLUDING THE CONSENTED DEVELOPMENT

19. The Gibbston Valley Station is characterised by areas of vineyards, improved, top-dressed and cultivated pasture on the valley floor and unimproved pasture on the hillslopes depending on slope, aspect and accessibility. The Gibbston valley is narrow and strongly confined by steep hillsides that descend to the steep sided gorge of the Kawarau River. The hillslopes are typically extensive areas of rough, untended pasture, differentiated from the river terraces and valley floors by a lack of fencing, the presence of scrub (native) with occasional wilding trees and briar rose.
20. The rural general zone that surround the GCZ is mostly classified as an ONL and the Kawarau River is classified as an ONF.
21. Massive rock outcrops are a distinctive feature of the valley, both on the valley floor and hillsides, contributing to the landscape character and high legibility. Of note is the steep bluff that serves as a pinch point in the valley, dividing the GVS into two separate visual catchments. The bluff is associated with a deeply incised water course identified as Toms Creek. The creek is a recognisable feature that intrudes into the valley floor across the middle of GVS with a high level of natural character conveyed by a dense cover of riparian vegetation.
22. Whilst much of the original vegetation has been modified or removed, the colour and texture of tussock grassland and grey scrub of the farmed hillslopes contribute to the distinctive identity of the Gibbston landscape and clearly define the more productive character of the valley floor.
23. In comparison to the high country, the lower hillslopes, and valley floor is divided into a patchwork of mostly 'tended' pasture interspersed with vineyards predominantly on the southern side of the Gibbston Highway. The northern side of the highway is dominated by open pasture and grazed. Exotic amenity and shelter trees punctuate the valley floor mostly clustered around buildings but for the most part the landscape character is open.
24. Winery, farm buildings and houses are mostly concentrated in clusters on the flatter areas, surrounded by (exotic) amenity trees and shelter planting south of the main state highway.
25. It is important to acknowledge that the existing environment also consists of consented development, including that un-built. The consented development on Gibbston Valley Station south of the State Highway comprises the following :

- A Vintners Village with 13 buildings (3000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor area)
  - 42 visitor accommodation units co-located with the Vintners Village
  - 14 visitor accommodation units accessed from Resta Road
  - Staff accommodation, service and maintenance buildings
  - A spa complex adjacent to Toms Creek with 6 buildings
26. The consented development on Gibbston Valley Station north of the State Highway comprises:
- An 18 hole golf course
  - 30 visitor accommodation units
  - A community building
  - 10 buildings containing 13 residential units
27. Extensive planting for mitigation and increased vineyard planting was included in the consent. Further development comprising an underpass and parking area on the northern side of the Gibbston Highway opposite the established Gibbston Winery has been approved by NZTA but still awaiting resource consent. To date, the Gibbston Valley River Trail has been developed through the property as a cycle trail with a further 25 km of trail established on Rabbit Ridge.
28. The consented built development is ancillary to viticulture and mostly located around existing buildings and amenity tree clusters on the station or discretely located below and north of the Gibbston Highway to minimise visual effects. Inevitably this will result in an increased built presence in the valley that is not yet realised. The establishment of an 18 hole golf course will extend over the entire area of land between the Gibbston Highway and the Kowarau River and will noticeably change the outlook from the highway from a natural pastoral outlook to one of a contrived, manicured landscape. The golf course landscape will be, in my view, somewhat contrary to the intent of the Gibbston Zone purpose and its anticipated landscape character, reflecting instead a character typically associated with Millbrook. However the point is that, in granting consent, the Council has determined that the property is able to absorb a high level of development without significantly impacting on the landscape character and the GVS environment.

## **PROPOSED SUBZONE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE RURAL LANDSCAPE**

29. GSVL proposes a subzone (SZ) to enable a comprehensive and holistic development that is consistent with the intent of the Gibbston Character Zone. The constrained nature of the valley supports the subzone as being the best approach to balancing an efficient use of the land resource while protecting the distinctive character and sense of place of Gibbston. It is acknowledged that there are high ecological and archaeological values associated with the area and these will continue to be protected under the SZ provisions.
30. The proposed SZ is supported by a Structure Plan, which sets out the Activity Areas 1 – 8 (AA1 – AA8) where the SZ will provide for development. Refer Sheet 2. These areas include consented but as yet unrealised development that is outlined on the Master Plan attached as Sheet 9.
31. In some cases the consented development is amended and revised to better fit the ‘Paddock to Plate’ concept and the sustainable, eco-friendly philosophy of the GVS, as explained in the evidence of Mr Hunt. The following activity areas are described in terms of the consented development, the development that would be allowed under the proposed SZ and the landscape context.

### **Activity Area 1. (AA1) Gibbston Valley Winery Complex**

The area consists of existing development comprising a cluster of red roofed, barn-like, buildings housing the winery, cheesery and cafe, restaurant, cellar door and other ancillary commercial activity, including a gift shop and cycle hire. Refer Sheet 4 Viewpoints 1 – 3. These activities are situated around a large car park fronting the Gibbston Highway surrounded by a stone wall identifying the Winery complex. The buildings are visible from the Gibbston Highway but contained at the base of the steep hill slope with a land backdrop, surrounded by pine shelter trees and amenity planting. Vineyards extend to either side of the Winery Complex fronting the Gibbston Highway until they become contained by the steep bluffs extending to the road reserve. Consented development includes visitor accommodation and a Spa Facility as an extension to the existing development. More recently, resource consent RM170012 was lodged with the QLDC relating to the redesign and reconfiguring of a visitor accommodation complex in the vicinity of the existing Gibbston Valley Winery node of development. This consent is an amendment to resource consent RM110747, which authorised the establishment of a visitor accommodation complex, including cottages (50 units) and associated roading earthworks and landscaping near Gibbston Valley Winery Complex. This development included the luxury lodge consented under RM040101.

32. The SZ will enable further commercial development ancillary to the winery and additional short term accommodation to be located behind the vineyards and consented development.

### **Activity Area 2. (AA2) 'Paddock to Plate' - Culinary and Oenology School**

33. Currently gently sloping open pasture, this area lies to the north of the Gibbston Highway and is proposed for an extensive car park area linked to the Gibbston Valley Winery (AA1) by an underpass to the highway, which I understand is pending resource consent approval from the QLDC. The balance area of open pasture extending to the Kawarau Gorge is consented as part of the golf course. Refer Sheet 5, Viewpoints 4 – 7. The Gibbston Valley River Trail meanders along the crest of the Gorge and links through to the Gibbston Valley Winery Complex albeit partly obstructed by the Gibbston Highway. The cycle trail will utilise the underpass once it is constructed.
34. The SZ will allow development of tourism hub centred on a culinary and oenology school including reception, conference and incentive buildings. Potential development may consist of a range of visitor accommodation and other compatible development such as a Spa facility, Kids Club and other guest activities. Building heights will be limited to 7 m. The landscape setting will consist of vineyards, orchards, a Truffiere and productive gardens amidst groupings of amenity trees. A stone wall is intended along the road frontage to match that of the Gibbston Valley Winery Complex. This will convey a cohesive amenity to the tourism hub and afford some visual mitigation consistent with the wider district character.
35. The rationale for the layout is supported by the underpass, which will provide ready access between the existing and future development on either side of the Gibbston Highway. Essentially, the SZ will provide a node of concentrated development linked with and appearing as part of the Winery Complex.
36. The productive planting (vineyards and orchards) will extend along the SH frontage to provide a corridor of vineyards and afford some screening of the development anticipated by the SZ. It is likely that glimpses of rooflines set amidst amenity trees and beyond vineyards and orchards will be possible.
37. The characteristic open rough textured slopes and complex skylines of the surrounding hills will remain visually dominant as a positive contrast to the productive valley floor. Other features, such as Toms Creek and the rocky bluff will retain their natural character and contribute to the unique sense of place of Gibbston. Furthermore, the development node at



AA1 and AA2 will be contained by these landscape features creating a coherent logic and rationale to the proposed Structure Plan layout.

### **Activity Area 3 (AA3) Long View**

38. This area lies south of the Gibbston Highway and comprises 13 consented units for workers accommodation, maintenance and service area. The units will replace the existing farm buildings, and a dwelling surrounded by a group of established amenity trees. A consented Spa complex of six buildings is located at the western end of this activity area tucked in alongside Toms Creek. Refer Sheet 6, Viewpoint 8 and Sheet 7, Viewpoint 10.
39. The SZ will enable resident units that will also be managed for visitor accommodation units. These will be located between the existing farm base buildings and Spa complex to replace the consented units currently located behind the Vintners Village. The building height is consented to 7 m but is proposed to be limited to 5.5 m by the SZ provisions, with further controls in regard to colours and materials. Future residential development will be separated from view from Gibbston Highway by vineyards and orchard planting along the site frontage and behind a small paddock that will double as grazing and overflow parking for community events on the Gibbston Patch (AA7). A stone wall is intended along the road frontage to identify the GVS while allowing views of vineyards beyond.

### **Activity Area 4 (AA4) Vintners Village**

40. The Vintners Village is consented as a commercial centre catering for local residents with 13 buildings set behind orchard plantings proposed along the Gibbston Highway frontage. Refer Sheet 6, Viewpoint 9. Some further development comprising a Brewery and commercial outlets for local produce will be enabled in this area by the SZ provisions, although it is not intended that the area of the village increases. The intention of the Vintners Village development is to provide community facilities, complimentary commercial activity and support to local residents and visitors. Importantly the Vintners Village will provide the opportunity for residents to market and sell their produce locally through a communal Cellar Door. A building height limit of 7m is proposed.

### **Activity Area 5 (AA5) The Terrace**

41. This area lies north of the Gibbston Highway and comprises 30 consented residential units that will also be managed for visitor accommodation and a part of the golf course extending to the crest of the Kowarau Gorge. The unrealised but consented development within AA5 will

be up to 7 m in height and largely hidden from view by the steep sloping topography below the Gibbston Highway. Views are limited to an existing entrance, which is located at a group of established trees and an existing cob cottage. These features will be retained as part of the heritage character and landscape values of the locality. The Structure Plan intends that the consented golf course remains in front of AA5 although it is reduced to nine holes. Refer Sheet 7, Viewpoint 11 and 12.

42. The SZ provisions will allow an expansion of the managed residential units that will extend up to and be contained by Toms Creek to the west. For the most part views of these units will be obscured by the steep topography immediately adjoining and below the highway and therefore the units will be unlikely to be appreciated by passing traffic except for a brief glimpse at the western end. A 1.2 m stone wall is intended along the Gibbston Highway to identify and enhance the character of the station and in doing so will afford further mitigation. Native planting is shown on the Structure Plan along the Gibbston Highway limited to species<sup>1</sup> local to the area and with a maximum height of 1.5 - 2 m. The native species have been chosen to maintain views over this stretch of the highway, which are dominated by the steep hillside of Mt Hocken and the distinctive fan extending to the Kawarau River Gorge.

#### **Activity Area 6 (AA6) Glenlee**

43. This area consists of 14 consented residential units that will also be managed for visitor accommodation set amongst established trees, the existing Winery buildings and residential dwelling accessed from Resta Road. The residential dwelling will be removed to accommodate future development but the Winery will remain.
44. The foreground view from the Gibbston Highway encompasses a post and rail fence bounding vineyards with the Winery and dwelling screened by established exotic and evergreen trees and separated from the adjoining Gibbston Valley Station and Wentworth vineyards by a poplar shelterbelt. Refer Sheet 8, Viewpoint 14.
45. The SZ will allow an extension of residential units to the west along the base of the steep hillslopes up to the open space of AA7. The development will be set back at least 100 m from the boundary. A 1.2 m high stone wall will replace the post and rail and in combination with the vineyards and setback distance will impede any view of both the consented and anticipated buildings from the Gibbston Highway.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer Appendix A for Species List

### **Activity Area 7 (AA7) The Gibbston Pitch**

46. Activity Area 7 is consented for 42 visitor accommodation units located behind the Vinters Village. The current and popular use of the area for open air concerts has prompted reconsideration of the consented built development. This has resulted in changes to the Structure Plan to provide an open space area for concerts and available to the community for sporting events as well as farmers markets, wine festivals and other community activities. The area will remain as grazed pasture and serves to separate AA 3 and AA 6. This activity area is centrally located and readily accessible from the nearby compatible development and activities within the consented Vinters Village. Refer Sheet 8, Viewpoint 13.

### **Activity Area 8 The Bowl**

47. The SZ will enable development of this area for workers accommodation and a service and maintenance facility. The area is physically and visually removed from the Gibbston Highway with access via Resta Road. Any building will be a maximum of 7 m in height. The existing topography forms a natural basin area so future development will be well contained and obscured both physically and visually from public views. Refer Sheet 8, Viewpoint 15.

### **Productive Planting (PL)**

48. The productive planting areas are an integral component of the SZ in achieving the anticipated character of Gibbston. The activity areas are shown within these extensive areas of productive planting which consist of vines, orchards and nut plantations. The SP sets out an overall coherent productive framework that utilises the land resource but has also been considered in regard to creating a setting to absorb the consented and proposed development. Some vine and orchard planting has already occurred while other areas will be planted as part of the previously consented development conditions.

### **Golf Course**

49. A golf course remains as part of the consented development over the GVS however this is now reduced to a nine hole course in favour of increased areas of productive planting and AA2. The location of the nine hole golf course at a lower elevation and north of AA 5 indicates that views will be reduced from the Gibbston Highway.

### **Balance Areas**

50. The balance areas of the SZ will remain as unimproved tussock grassland pasture or grey shrubland. These areas convey a more natural character and typically contain higher ecological values than the productive areas and activity areas within the GVS subzone.

## **LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT**

51. At a detailed local scale any change proposed for the landscape must rely on an actual character description and evaluation to establish the ability of the landscape to absorb development without adverse effects on its recognised values / importance and the compatibility and appropriateness of the proposed development with the site and surrounding landscape.
52. The characteristics that promote the ability of the landscape to absorb development include:
- The existing degree of modification or degree of departure from naturalness (landform, land cover, natural processes)
  - A complex landform
  - Abrupt changes in topography (edges of landform units)
  - Context
  - ‘Appropriateness’ of activity (can it be located elsewhere or is it location dependant?)
  - Compatibility of the development with the landform (i.e. is it consistent with a typical settlement pattern and/or surrounding land use)
  - Limited visibility
  - A treed setting
  - Relative low density of building
53. Any activity has the potential to affect or alter the character, and amenity or openness of a landscape. However, it is important to appreciate that changes to a landscape need not necessarily be adverse. Whether effects are adverse or not depend to a large extent on what is valued and considered appropriate by the PDP, and the public expectation of what can be reasonably anticipated to occur in the landscape.
54. The s42A report relied on Marion Read’s assessment of the GVS submission proposing the new Gibbston Valley Subzone (SZ) and intended development. Ms Read supports some parts of the development enabled by the SZ and raises concerns about the ability of the landscape to absorb the development in other areas. My comments address her assessment with direct

reference to the Structure Plan Areas (in order of AA1 – AA8) and my description of these as set out above.

55. At paragraph 17.9 Ms Read accepts that new tourism activity located around the existing Gibbston Valley Winery complex (AA1) could probably be absorbed into the vicinity being visually mitigated by the mountainside backdrop and the existing vineyard. However, she cautions against development creep up the slope above the 380m contour. I agree with this assessment and note that the 380m contour is included as part of the SZ provisions.
56. At paragraph 17.8 I assume Ms Read is referring to the AA2 'Paddock to Plate' tourism hub. This activity area has undergone some refinement in the interim and is essentially a development node closely associated with the Gibbston Valley Winery complex. A significant buffer of productive planting is proposed by the SP between the Gibbston Highway and the development allowed by the SZ provisions.
57. Ms Read considers reliance on vegetation to screen the development within this area as being inappropriate, but I disagree. I am aware that mitigation planting has been accepted and is required as part of the existing resource consents. This indicates that planting is an acceptable form of mitigation by the council. I understand the required planting will occur prior to the construction of the consented development. In regard to assessing other areas such as AA 1 above, Ms Read accepts vegetation as providing mitigation so I am not clear why her opinion differs in this instance. In my view the extended productive planting of vineyards and orchards fulfils the intended landscape outcome for the Gibbston Character Zone and in doing so provides substantial visual mitigation.
58. I also note that there is further clarification around the areas north of the Gibbston Highway as being marginal for pinot noir production. According to the viticultural evidence of Mr Keys, much of the area is more suited to an earlier harvesting time for the production of Rose and Methode Traditionelle wines so vineyards are proposed as part of the SP to be planted on areas previously considered marginal. Notwithstanding this, the balance area is equally suitable for orchard and nut crops, both of which have the ability to maintain the character of the Gibbston Valley as a productive landscape.
59. In light of this, the SZ provisions aim to provide for development that builds on a 'paddock to plate' philosophy, instead of the consented golf course. I consider that the Culinary and Oenology School will be more compatible with the productive activities of the vicinity and as

ancillary activities will uphold the landscape character anticipated by the Gibbston Character Zone.

60. In addition, my site visit revealed that the land proposed for the AA2 tourism hub slopes steadily down towards the Kawarau River Gorge so I am confident that the combination of productive planting, generous built setbacks and sloping topography will not result in visually prominent development within this area to the extent stated by Ms Read.
61. In relation to AA3 (Long View) and AA6 (Glenlee) Ms Read restates her reservations about relying on planting as mitigation of visual effects. She also raises concerns regarding the proposed density and extent of development as adversely affecting the character and productivity of the valley.
62. Whilst I share some concerns over the potential urban character I am also mindful that much of this area has already been consented for development and that the SZ seeks to provide for development under the SZ provisions and to extend vine planting, rather than proposing changes to a blank canvas of pasture. Essentially the built development is a relocation of that already consented behind the Vintners Village, rather than an increase in buildings within the site. Low maximum height limits at 5.5 m, lowered ground levels, building setbacks of minimum 100 metres and controls on colours and material will assist in providing appropriate visual mitigation.
63. Ms Read refers to Policy 23.2.1.3, which requires the Council to ensure that activities not based on the rural resource occur only where the character and productivity of the valley would not be adversely affected.
64. The structure plan provides for planting areas in such a way that utilises the land resource but has also been considered in regard to creating a setting to absorb the consented and proposed development. The vineyards which range between 1.8 m (during winter) in height to over 2 m (during summer) with full foliage cover are consistent with a productive viticulture character and will afford appropriate screening of development from the Gibbston Highway.
65. So to my mind the character and productivity of the valley will be maintained by the existing and proposed increase in vineyards and other productive plantings, which will be the dominant feature of the Gibbston Highway road corridor.

66. Although Ms Read raises concern that the residential development will appear of near urban character (refer paragraph 17.10), in reality the built development will be separated by existing and strategic planting against a steep hill backdrop.
67. The existing planting consists of mature trees around the farm buildings and although the buildings will be removed the trees will be retained to provide an established setting for future residential development. Similar amenity planting will extend along the base of the hillslopes to ensure that the 'relocated' built development will be visually absorbed into the landscape. In addition, strategic planting in response to local landforms, specifically the small wetland located midway along AA 3, will avoid a linear appearance to consented development and that enabled by the SZ, while enhancing natural character. Similarly, the extensive riparian planting along Toms Creek also provides an amenity outlook to consented development at the western end, particularly for east bound traffic.
68. Overall I note that the consented and potential development on AA3 will be nestled at the base of the hill slope, restricted in height and screened by the foreground vineyard. I note that a similar conclusion satisfies Ms Reads concerns in relation to AA1.
69. Despite planting mitigation and building controls it is likely that the SZ provisions will result in glimpses of residential unit rooflines beyond vineyards and amidst amenity trees. I do not consider this to be contrary to the character anticipated by the Gibbston Character Zone.
70. Ms Read is of the opinion that the future development provided by the SZ in AA4 (Vintners Village) will have an adverse effect on the valued character of the wider valley. The Vintners Village is consented development so effects on landscape character will not be readily distinguishable from that already anticipated. Furthermore, the intention of the Vintners Village is to support local productivity by offering a cellar door, farmers market and community facilities for local workers and visitors. I consider this achieves the broader policy framework under the GCZ, which emphasises the maintenance of the productive activities of the vicinity.
71. At paragraph 17.11, Ms Read identifies two further pods of residential development that are proposed north of the highway. I assume she refers to what I have called The Rockery and AA5 (The Terrace). Both of these areas contain consented development but only one (AA5) is proposed as part of the SZ. Even so I agree that no additional effects are likely to arise.

72. The recent introduction of AA7 is not commented on by Ms Read but given that it comprises open space that to all intents and purposes will remain as grazed pasture I consider it will satisfy the GCZ provisions. In addition to providing certainty, it will separate future built development and contributes to a spacious character.
73. At paragraph 17.7 Ms Read agrees that AA8 proposed for staff accommodation is discretely located and furthermore supported by GCZ policy 23.2.1.4. She concludes that AA8 is therefore in keeping with the existing and anticipated viticultural character of the valley landscape. I agree with Ms Reads opinion on the proposed development provided by the SZ provisions for this activity area.

### **Summary**

74. The development potential of the Gibbston landscape in relation to viticulture and productive activities in addition to recreation and tourism will be realised by the Gibbston Valley Subzone. The Structure Plan sets out the relationship between the built development and working productive landscape as a comprehensive and integrated package. The type of development proposed encompasses viticulture and activities ancillary to viticulture, orchards and other productive planting, associated community facilities, visitor and residential accommodation, and promotes tourism and recreational activities. Natural character, ecological, and archaeological values are acknowledged and maintained on the site with the ability to be experienced by the public.
75. The increased area of vineyards, orchards and horticultural planting intended by the subzone will convey a strongly ordered pattern that communicates a sense of scale and perspective, emphasising the subtleties of the underlying landform. Shelter and amenity trees clustered around farm base buildings and residential dwellings are a typical feature of the area, and will continue to provide the immediate setting surrounding the larger scale buildings – storage sheds, barns, winery production and cellar doors. The productive promise, linked to cultural traditions and lifestyle, conveys a particularly romantic picturesque notion of landscape consistent with the Gibbston Character Zone.
76. Despite the increased development enabled by the SZ, in my opinion a range of alternative uses of the station property may be undertaken while maintaining the qualities and values of the Gibbston landscape.

### **ASSESSMENT AGAINST RELEVANT STATUTORY AND POLICY DOCUMENTS**



77. Pertinent landscape matters are to be found in Part II of the RMA. The Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan gives effect to the RMA within the context of the Queenstown Lakes District.
78. In the PQLDP landscape-related matters particularly relevant to this proposal are principally addressed in the following:
- Chapter 3 - Strategic Direction
  - Chapter 6 - Landscapes
  - Chapter 23 – Gibbston Character Zone

### **Chapter 3 Strategic Direction**

79. Essentially this chapter of the PDP sets out the over-arching strategic direction for the management of growth, land use and development in a manner that ensures sustainable management of the Queenstown Lakes District's special qualities. Special qualities listed in the chapter include *'dramatic alpine landscape free of inappropriate development'*, *'diverse, resilient, inclusive and connected communities'*, *'a district providing a variety of lifestyle choices'* and *'an innovative and diversifying economy based around a strong visitor industry'*.
80. Within Chapter 3 there are a number of goals, objectives and policies which provide direction for the more detailed provisions related to zones and specific topics within the District Plan. Therefore it follows that the provisions contained within the respective chapters of the PDP give effect to the goals, objectives and policies contained in Chapter 3.
81. With regard to the goals, objectives and policies relating to landscape and visual amenity I consider the proposed subzone for the GVS, which for the most part is within the Gibbston Character Zone (Chapter 23 – PDP) appropriate. The subzone enables a holistic and comprehensive development, providing assurance that future built form will be generally coherent/consistent with the character anticipated by the Gibbston Character Zone.
82. It is therefore considered, that the mechanisms of the proposed subzone satisfy the purpose of Chapter 23 and in doing so is favourable with the goals, objectives and policies as set out in Chapter 6 to manage growth, land use and development in a sustainable manner.

### **Chapter 6 Landscapes**

83. The purpose of this chapter recognises the landscape as a significant resource to the Queenstown Lakes District and wider region. Furthermore the purpose recognises that landscape requires protection from inappropriate activities that could degrade its qualities, character and values.
84. This chapter recognises the District's landscapes are of significant value to the people who live in, work in or visit the District. It is acknowledged that the District relies in a large part for its social and economic wellbeing on the quality of the landscape, open spaces and environmental image.
85. Chapter 6 contains values, objectives and policies which provide direction for the more detailed provisions related to the protection of the landscape as a resource. To this effect the more detailed provisions within Chapter 23 – Gibbston Character Zone, recognise the overarching values, objectives and policies of Chapter 6 - Landscape.
86. Notwithstanding this it is necessary to consider the effects of this proposal as described against the relevant provisions of Chapter 6 – Landscapes. Objectives 1 and its implementing policies concentrate on the avoidance of urban subdivision and development in Rural Zones, while recognition is given to pastoral farming as being the most appropriate for landscape character. It should be noted that the landscape categories as set out under Objective 1 do not apply to the Gibbston Character Zone.
87. Objective 2 and its policies relate to the cumulative effects of activities on landscape character and amenity values caused by incremental subdivision and development. With regard to the proposed SZ, it is considered the intent of this objective and related policies is met. The character and amenity values of the valley will be maintained by the existing and proposed increase in vineyards and other productive plantings, which will be the dominant feature of the road corridor.
88. Objectives 3 and 4 and their policies relate to ONL and ONFs and focus on avoiding subdivision and development. There is little guidance on what specific characteristics or aspects of values of the ONFs or ONLs should be maintained and enhanced. Notwithstanding this, it is my opinion that the provisions of the SZ gives recognition to these objectives and policies.
89. Objective 5 and its policies focus on ensuring subdivision and development does not degrade rural character and diminish visual amenity values of the rural landscape. To my mind Chapter 23 - Gibbston Character Zone provides for this. Further to this one needs to understand the

character that will result from previously consented development of Gibbston Valley Station that has yet to be realised. Character evolves, therefore I believe the intent of the PDP is not about avoiding any alteration to existing character, but managing it so it does not become of lower merit and quality.

90. Objective 8 and its policies recognise the dependence of tourism on the District's landscapes. Policy 6.3.8.4 gives specific recognition to the Gibbston Character Zone. The proposed GVSZ enables comprehensively planned future development that recognises both environmental and tourism expectations.

### **Chapter 23 Gibbston Character Zone**

91. The purpose of this chapter is to provide primarily for viticulture and commercial activities with an affiliation to viticulture within the Gibbston Valley. Furthermore the purpose recognises that this zone has experienced residential subdivision and development. This creates the potential to degrade the distinctive character and create conflict with established and anticipated intensive viticulture activities.
92. Chapter 23 contains objectives, policies, rules and assessment matters which detailed provisions related to the protection of the Gibbston Valley's distinctive character and sense of place, as well as its economic viability.
93. In summary, the SZ will satisfy the relevant GCZ objectives and policies by:
- Activity areas that are appropriately located to ensure potential productive land is maximised and character is maintained.
  - The Activity Areas which provide for a range of building ancillary to viticulture and worker accommodation
  - Providing a mechanism to comprehensively plan for development in areas with potential to absorb change.
  - Allowing for the establishment of activities that are complementary to the character and viability of the GCZ by avoiding the resource consent process which has the potential to result in ad-hoc development.

- Recognising the importance of nature conservation and ecosystems by proposing an integrated sustainable approach to the development and protection of natural values, including archaeological and heritage values.

94. Further to this, the Assessment Matters are addressed by the SZ in summary by the following:

- The scale and nature of the proposed development enabled by the SZ will be dominated by a working productive landscape
- Development is clustered within and separated by the vineyard and orchard setting.
- The development is not visually prominent from the Gibbston Highway, indistinguishable from the Crown Range Road and not visible from the Kawarau Gorge.
- Views to the wider landscape are maintained
- Planting is consistent with the natural topography and patterns
- Development boundaries follow the natural lines of the landscape
- Controls on built form , materials and colours ensure visual coherency and amenity
- The layout is rationalised by aggregating development and utilising common access ways, services, open space. Development is located in areas with least visual impact and least effect on landscape character
- The cumulative effects of development are addressed by the SZ Structure Plan rather than relying on individual resource consent process
- The SP represents a threshold whereby the landscape has reached its development capacity and protects the landscape from further development
- The proposed SZ enhances the character of the landscape and protects ecological values, natural character and cultural values.
- The SZ will provide workers accommodation and / or facilities that will benefit viticultural, winery and rural related activities in Gibbston Valley.

## **CONCLUSION**

95. The PDP focus on viticulture as a key landscape value restricts the ability of landowners to sustainably develop the rural land and meet growing visitor and economic demands.
96. The Gibbston Valley Subzone provisions as drafted provide for a productive valley character promoting a balance between enabling a holistic sustainable approach to comprehensive development to occur while providing for a certainty of protection for landscape values.
97. I consider that the scale, nature and effects of the future development enabled by the proposed Gibbston Valley Sub-zone will better achieve the overall purpose of the Gibbston Character Zone, while maintaining the quality and distinctive identity of the District's landscapes.