

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act

AND

IN THE MATTER The Queenstown Lakes District Proposed Plan  
Topic 12 – Upper Clutha mapping

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SUMMARY STATEMENT OF LANDSCAPE EVIDENCE OF **PADDY BAXTER** ON BEHALF OF  
ALLENBY FARMS LIMITED (#502 AND #1254)  
31st May 2017

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. My full name is Patrick John Baxter. I am a Director of Baxter Design Group Ltd (BDG), a Queenstown based consultancy specialising in Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Master-planning, Landscape Planning and Landscape Assessment. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Science and Diploma of Landscape Architecture. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.
2. This evidence I present today is a summary of my evidence prepared for Allenby Farms Ltd in support of the submission by Allenby Farms to the District Plan Review. I shall summarise that evidence and make comment on the rebuttal statement prepared by Ms Helen Mellsop dated 5 May 2017. I shall refer to my original evidence and attachments during the course of this summary.

## **LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION**

3. Most of the Mt Iron landform is classified as ONF. Both myself and Dr Marion Read agree with that. The bulk of the Mt Iron landform displays a high natural character, is largely clad in mature Kanuka with a mix of open grazed areas and with exotic vegetation including Conifers, Sweet Briar, Hawthorne and others on parts of the landform. Mt Iron is visually surrounded by residential development and is ring fenced at a variety of elevations, by urban and peri urban development.

## **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL**

4. The Proposed Mount Iron Park Rural Lifestyle Zone (the 'site') is approximately 19.7 ha in size. The proposal seeks to establish 15 building platforms (BP's), 3 of which contain existing dwellings, one of which is a substantial dwelling (proposed Lot 10 located at the west of the site).
5. The proposal seeks to contain effects with the proposed Building Platforms, each being up to 1700m<sup>2</sup> in size with 3 restricted to 1500m<sup>2</sup>. The effects arising from dwellings will be contained within those platforms. Minor temporary effects will arise from the formation of access driveways to those Building Platforms (I discuss this later in this statement). Lot boundaries will be in effect paper boundaries only, with the existing landscape outside the proposed BP's to remain in its current condition.
6. The main components of the proposal can be summarised as follows:
  - The retention of the existing Kanuka to enable the establishment of a controlled lifestyle development within a bush setting. The character of the proposed development will contrast visibly with the contiguous suburbs that exist to the west, east and north of the site, in particular the amenity of the Hidden Hills development.
  - The avoidance of large road batters (through road location on mild slope grades, utilising existing tracks, with road lighting not allowed)
  - All land outside the BP's and accesses will be fully protected in its existing cover, allowing for the natural existing indigenous vegetation and spread of indigenous vegetation in those areas.
  - Fencing restricted to the BP's and zone boundary.
  - Dwellings restricted to 500m<sup>2</sup> on BP's 1-9 and 13-15, and 275m<sup>2</sup> on BP's 10,11 & 12 with building heights restricted to 4.5 metres on all lots except lots 10, 11 & 12 where heights are

restricted to 3.8 metres. I note that the height of 4.5 metres coincides roughly with the average height of Kanuka at maturity.

- Other selective and specific controls in regards to colour and building form, with all roofs in Colorsteel Ironsand (dark grey) or similar.
- Dwelling owners required to undertake 400m<sup>2</sup> of indigenous planting within each BP. Any exotic plantings not to exceed 1m in height at full maturity.

## LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

7. The proposed location of the 15 BP's can be summarised as follows:
  - Proposed BP's 1-9 and 14-15 are located in lower elevations and, when viewed from those places shown in the photographs in my original attachments, sit within, or are viewed behind, an existing framework of rural residential and residential development.
  - Proposed BP's 12 and 13 are located in mid-level elevations, on the western end of the site and are hidden from wider views by existing landform and vegetation.
  - Proposed BP's 10, 11 & 12 are located at the upper elevations of the site. Specific restrictive rules will apply to dwellings in these 2 BP's with regard to dwelling heights and roof pitch.
8. Dwellings on the proposed BP's 1-9 and 15 are located behind landform and within pockets of open land, with a foreground of visible residential dwellings from western and northern views. The contiguous building controls in regards to height and colour in particular will ensure that these dwellings will be visually absorbed into the receiving landscape, in contrast to the pattern of visible colour and form of existing residential dwellings within those views.
9. Dwellings on proposed BP's 10, 11 & 12 are subject to specific restrictive controls to ensure that the dwellings are below skyline from views and will be difficult to perceive. They will be small, low, darkly coloured dwellings within a heavily vegetated framework of existing Kanuka. A dwelling on BP13 will be approximately 35 metres from the track set in an open area flanked by mature Kanuka. Walkers at this position are at the end (or beginning) of their track experience and established residential development on the Hidden Hills development is located close by and is visible
10. Lot 14 contains an established homestead with established gardens and amenity.
11. Within the site boundary, the BP's are located within distinct minor landforms on the site. Those landforms can be described as:
  - BP's 1, 2 and 14: Located on an existing lower terrace east of Bevan Place.
  - BP's 3-9 and 15: Located on the hill flank, within a series of undulating contours, within largely open grassed areas within the existing Kanuka framework.
  - BP's 10 and 11: Located on the upper portions of the site within areas largely covered by Kanuka.
  - BP's 12 and 13: Located on the eastern portion of the site within a valley extending southeast, and rising, from the south end of Hidden Hills Road.

12. The outcome of these distinct groups of dwellings in regards to visibility is that views of these proposed groups of dwellings are separate and distinct, with no single public viewpoint, aside from that western view shown **Attachment D**, where one is able to discern more than dwellings at any given view. In my **Attachment D** the majority of those lots will have only a sliver of roof potentially visible (I refer to my **Attachments** from my original evidence for clarification on this matter). Those attachments clearly show the lack of visibility of the BP locations and the minimising of possible adverse cumulative effects on the wider landscape values
13. I have recommended that the building footprint on Lot 12 be restricted to 275m<sup>2</sup>, for reasons I have outlined for BPs 10 and 11. I consider this site to be at the edge of an ONF, given its proximity to existing residential development and consequently the effects on landscape quality and character are acceptable.
14. In general the development south of Aubrey Road and at Hidden Hills exhibits a high degree of human influence in the form of dwellings, exotic plantings (both established mature and recent). The general pattern of residential development flanks the western and northern portions of the proposed development providing an established foreground to the development. From northern views (**Attachments F-I**), that existing development occupies a substantial portion of the visible northern flanks of the hillside, covering the third to lower half of that visible landform flanks. The upper portion of that landform remains largely covered in Kanuka, with smaller clearings visible but little evidence of human influence.
15. The cumulative effects arising from the development proposed on the site will exhibit a minor change to the existing amenity of that land. That landscape is relatively unique, an ONF flanked and abutted by residential development. In my opinion that character will remain substantially intact.

#### REBUTTAL EVIDENCE OF HELEN MELLSOP

16. Mellsop Para 3.23: I agree that the establishment of the proposed indigenous vegetation will require care and attention. However I note that similar vegetation on the existing Hidden Hills development has grown well. From my experience in overseeing planting in this area, I can confirm that the proposed plantings, with appropriate mulching and care, will establish well on this site. All indigenous plantings will be close to a dwelling and can be easily cared for with irrigation and weeding until established.
17. Mellsop Para 3.26: Exotic plantings: This requires clarification. The intention of the controls is to require substantial indigenous plantings by way of the requirement for 400 m<sup>2</sup> of indigenous plantings. My original recommendation for exotic plantings was for a small vegetable / herb garden of 20m<sup>2</sup> only. This has been amended to allow exotic plantings to be undertaken to not exceed 1m at maturity. I am satisfied with this.
18. Mellsop Paras 3.27 – 3.29: I agree that parts Mt Iron would be highly sensitive to cumulative effects. This proposal proposes dwellings that are consistently darker in colour and lower than surrounding existing dwellings in the vicinity. From any given view point a maximum of 3-4 dwellings will be potentially visible, albeit recessively coloured, with the bulk of the dwellings at similar elevations to existing residential housing from public views. The wider visible character of the northern flanks of Mt Iron will still be largely defined by the current existing residential development, with the proposed development a minor addition to that pattern, albeit a less visible one.

19. In general, the wider visual amenity values of the northern flanks will remain intact.
20. Mellsop Para 3.30: I acknowledge that the proposed indigenous plantings will differ in hue and colour from the surrounding Kanuka forest. Those colours however will be minimal areas of colour within the wider colour pattern dominated by Kanuka. Indigenous plantings, other than Kanuka, is located around many established residential dwellings at Hidden Hills and cannot be readily detected.

P J Baxter 30<sup>th</sup>  
May 2017