

Before the Hearing Panel

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (**Act**)

In the matter of Priority Area Landscape Schedules Variation to the
Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan

Summary of evidence of Scott Edgar on behalf of Silverlight Studios Limited

8 November 2023

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Summary

1. On 11 September 2023 I filed a brief of evidence on behalf of a number of submitters including:
 - Silverlight Studios Limited (Submitter 175)
2. My evidence in chief included general commentary in relation to the RCL Priority Area Preamble (the Preamble) and the landscape capacity rating scale before addressing matters of interest to my clients in relation to specific landscape schedules.
3. I participated in expert conferencing on 3 October 2023 and signed the resulting Joint Witness Statement (the JWS).
4. I consider that the updated RCL Preamble and the amended capacity rating scale set out in the JWS are appropriate and provide clarity as to the intent and application of the landscape schedules and acknowledge the high level assessment that has informed their preparation.
5. I consider that, with the amendments set out in the JWS, the landscape schedules will provide useful guidance for future plan change and resource consent processes and will help ensure that the identified values of the PAs are appropriately protected (ONF/L), maintained or enhanced (RCL).

Silverlight Studios Update

6. Since the fast tracked resource consents for the Silverlight Studios project were granted the consent holder has made, and continues to make, substantial progress to giving effect to those consents. Following the filing of my evidence in chief extensions to the lapse dates of the fast tracked resource consents have been approved by QLDC and ORC such that the QLDC consents will lapse on 14 March 2029 (if not given effect to within that timeframe).
7. Silverlight Studios have been working hard to progress the detailed design and secure the necessary investment to get the consented studios up and running. This has been complicated by global economic uncertainty, the governments review of New Zealand's screen tax incentives scheme and the writers and actors strikes in the US.
8. Economic uncertainty appears to be stabilising somewhat and the review of the tax incentive scheme has been resolved. The writers strike was resolved on 26 September and it is hoped that a resolution to the actors strike is imminent.
9. Silverlight Studios believe that once these obstacles to film making and investment are removed swift progress will be made in giving effect to the consents.

Halliday Road – Corbridge RCL PA Schedule 21.23.2

10. The submission of Silverlight Studios Ltd related to the Halliday Road - Corbridge RCL PA Schedule (Schedule 21.23.2) and sought that the consented film studio development is better recognised in the schedule.
11. I have read Mr. Espie and Mr. Head's JWS on the Halliday Road – Corbridge Schedule dated 5 October 2023 and the further amended schedule text presented in Council's opening legal submissions dated 17 October 2023.
12. I consider that the text amendments to the Halliday Road – Corbridge Schedule appropriately recognise the consented Silverlight Studios development. I acknowledge that the Silverlight Studios project is ambitious and substantial and that, until physical works begin, there may be some uncertainty as to whether the consents will be implemented. The Silverlight Studios development does however form part of the existing environment and therefore should be acknowledged within the schedule.
13. I consider that the language used in the amended schedule is appropriate in that it acknowledges the fact that substantial development has been consented within the PA but that it is yet to be implemented.
14. I note that the opening legal submissions version of the schedule has been undated to incorporate the agreed amended landscape capacity rating scale. Consequently the capacity for 'urban expansions' has been changed from 'no capacity' to 'extremely limited or no capacity'. I consider that the amended rating scale is appropriate and that the consequential change to the capacity rating for urban expansions within the Halliday Road – Corbridge PA adequately addresses the concerns of Silverlight Studios in this regard, being that 'urban expansions' include expansions through resource consent or plan change processes and a 'no capacity' rating for urban expansion may stand in the way of rezoning around the film studio development once it is constructed and operational.
15. While I consider that the 'extremely limited or no capacity' rating for urban expansion is appropriate and preferable to the previous 'no capacity' rating I consider that the qualifier set out in my evidence in chief may still be helpful in providing guidance as to the circumstances in which there might be capacity for urban expansion.
16. If a qualifier is deemed necessary I would recommend the following wording:

Urban Expansions – *Extremely limited or no capacity with any capacity for urban expansions likely to be limited to plan changes that seek to apply an urban zoning and/or urban growth boundary around existing development that is urban in character.*

Scott Edgar

8 November 2023