

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER A variation to the QLDC Proposed
District Plan – Urban intensification

BY **FRIENDS OF ARROWTOWN VILLAGE**
Various submitters

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF PHILIP BLAKELY

Dated: 31 July 2025

Introduction

- [1] My name is Philip Blakely. I prepared evidence for the Friends of Arrowtown Village dated 4 July 2025 on the urban intensification variation (**UIV**) regarding landscape. My qualifications and experience are set out in my Statement of Evidence. I have lived and worked in or near Arrowtown for 40 years and have had extensive involvement in Arrowtown planning and design.
- [2] My evidence addresses the overlap between landscape, urban design and special character in relation to the urban intensification variation (**UIV**) proposed by QLDC.
- [3] This summary consolidates my expert evidence on the UIV and responds to rebuttal evidence presented by Ms Amy Bowbyes (24 July 2025).

Summary Statement

- [4] In the context of Arrowtown, landscape character, amenity and heritage values are inextricably intertwined and linked.
- [5] Arrowtown's unique location and topographical features forms a special setting for the historic town. It has its own specific identity which differs from all other towns.
- [6] The Arrowtown Design Guidelines (**ADG**) identifies the importance of the following features as the essence of Arrowtown as it relates to landscape and character:
 - (a) its' unique setting (next to the Arrow River and the enclosing hills and mountains)
 - (b) low key, rural, small scale, early mining built heritage and features
 - (c) the pattern and layout of settlement including lot size and layout
 - (d) simplicity, spaciousness
 - (e) informal, organic, natural surfaces

- (f) lack of traditional urban streetscape elements (such kerbs and channel), narrow roads
- (g) a walking town
- (h) abundant vegetation, mature trees, plantings, green spaces, grass verges, gravel road shoulders, semi wild character, with trees dominating and usually taller than buildings
- (i) views and vistas to surrounding natural features and landscape

- [7] With the growth of the town since the 1960's there was a recognition and strong desire by the community for there to be a visual cohesion and connection between 'Old Arrowtown' and the newer residential areas (through QLDC led Charettes & Shaping Our Futures initiatives). The Charettes and Shaping our Futures were driven and encouraged by QLDC and in terms of the Charettes lead to the ADG and their subsequent adoption into the District Plan and which includes the whole town, not just the historic zones. No other community has similar recognition in the District Plan. That is what contributes to Arrowtown being unique in our District.
- [8] There is, a consistency and visual cohesion across the whole town primarily as a result of current height controls and density. The consistency is derived from a mix of single and low scale double storey buildings and the effects of planting and vegetation to soften built form.
- [9] Building height, design standards, and density controls are important in allowing for the presence of trees and vegetation within new development.
- [10] The existing character and amenity of the town is important in the appreciation of views to the surrounding landscape and features. This is primarily due to the limits to the heights of buildings which allows for unobstructed viewshafts of the surrounding landscape and features to be maintained.
- [11] The relationship between the surrounding landscape context and setting and the built environment is an important aspect of Arrowtown's

character e.g. the small township, surrounded by parkland and a rural setting, and nestled into the corner of a dramatic physical landscape provides context and meaning for the historic village. The town sits harmoniously into this setting and, in turn, the setting provides the backdrop for understanding and appreciation of the historic core.

- [12] In the same way that Arrowtown's UGB controls the size of the town and gives meaning to, and provides understanding of the historic context, it is important that new development within the town is compatible and harmonious with the historic and landscape context and sits comfortably in the landscape.

Effects of Variation and proposed amendments

- [13] The effects of the proposed Variation on the landscape character of Arrowtown, are effects at both a contextual level and effects within the town on streetscape, landscape character and amenity.
- [14] The UIV (and to a lesser extent the amendments) will impact and change the perception of the small scale, unified, coherent historic town nestled easily into its location, and importantly providing the setting and context for the historic/heritage town.
- [15] An increase in the town's population will put further pressure on the Old Town eroding the fragile characteristics and features that are the essence of the Old Town e.g. gravel footpaths and carparks, grass swales and verges (features born of a small rural town) and not able to be sustained with a larger population.
- [16] Within the New Town (MDRZ and LDSRZ) the combined effects of the changes to height and density would substantially alter Arrowtown's, low rise, open landscape and streetscape character and amenity.
- [17] In the MDRZ I support the retention of the status quo for both height and density.
- [18] In the LDRZ, I consider 8m is too high and that the current limit of 6.5m should be retained but with the ability to increase height (up to a

maximum of 7m and some increase in density) by way of a discretionary consent.

- [19] The proposed Variation, even with the more moderate changes supported in Council's s42A report and evidence, will adversely impact on the setting and context for the historic/heritage town.
- [20] The proposed Variation threatens the visual cohesion and connection between the Old Town and newer residential areas and would create a disconnect and disrupt character and amenity.

Comment on Rebuttal Evidence of Amy Bowbyes

- [21] In her rebuttal evidence, Ms Bowbyes refers to the Decisions on the Te Putahi Ladies Mile Variation (**TPLM**) which found that "given the high proportion of the District being ONF or ONL, urban development will inevitably be juxtaposed against ONL/Fs and found that this of itself is not an inherent adverse effect." Ms Bowbyes comments (at 5.7) that "the same logic applies to existing views of ONL/Fs from Arrowtown."
- [22] I have stated in my evidence (at [34]) that in my opinion there would be effects but not adverse effects on (or views of) ONL/ONF due to the scale of the surrounding landscape but that the changes will affect the human scale of the urban development relative to the landscape.
- [23] Of greater significance than views of ONL/F from Arrowtown is that ONL/Fs are part of the setting, backdrop and context of Arrowtown.

Conclusion

- [24] Arrowtown is a nationally important heritage town. It is precious and unique. There is a responsibility to manage future development that is sensitive and responsive to context. Blanket urban intensification as proposed in the Variation and to a lesser extent by the s42A amendments is inappropriate and are not compatible with Arrowtown's character. New development needs to recognise and be responsive to context and character.

Dated: 31 July 2025

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Philip Blakely