

Memorandum

Project: Coneburn Industrial Zone
Subject: Landscape and Visual Effects
Date: 26/10/2021

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Bridget Gilbert Landscape Architecture Limited (**BGLA**) has been engaged by Queenstown Lakes District Council (**Council**) to undertake a review of expert landscape comments prepared Ms Michelle Snodgrass in support of the proposed variation to open space at the southern entrance of the Coneburn Industrial Zone (**CIZ**) to accommodate a roundabout and temporary construction areas.
- 1.2 The key documents I have referred to in preparing my comments are as follows:
- a) Coneburn Proposed Zone Changes Landscape Assessment Report, prepared by Michelle Snodgrass Landscape Architecture, undated (**Landscape Report**).
 - b) QLDC Hearing of Submissions on Proposed District Plan Report 17-8, Report and Recommendations of Independent Commissioners Regarding Mapping of Coneburn Valley, Queenstown Park, Jacks Point.
 - c) PDP Chapter 44 Coneburn Industrial Zone, December 2020 (Decisions Version).
 - d) Intersection Design Plans, prepared by Stantec, dated May 2021.
 - e) Roundabout vs Intersection plan, prepared by Clark Fortune McDonald and Associates, undated.
 - f) Landscape Concept plan for the proposed subdivision on the west side of State Highway 6 (SH6), prepared by Stephen Riddle Landscape Design, dated August 2019.
 - g) Letter from Ms Snodgrass to Mr Nick Geddes, dated 20 July 2021 (**Landscape Letter**).
- 1.3 My landscape comments have been prepared during Covid Alert Level 3 lockdown (with Auckland border restrictions in place). While I have not undertaken a specific site visit to assist the preparation of these comments, I am generally familiar with the CIZ site and surrounding area. I am also familiar with all of the viewing locations addressed in Ms Snodgrass's Landscape Report and Landscape Letter.

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- 1.4 I have also visited the southern flanks of Peninsula Hill (to the north of the site) as part of field work in relation to the Jacks Point appeal and flown across the western side of the Remarkables by helicopter as part of field work for the Queenstown Park appeals.
- 1.5 I confirm that prior to the hearing it is my intention to make a specific site visit, following which I will advise Council if my site visit has changed any of the comments set out in this Memorandum.

2 Landscape effects of the proposed roundabout and temporary construction areas

- 2.1 Ms Snodgrass provides a brief description of the landscape changes arising from the proposed roundabout and concludes that it will not have any effect on the visibility of the CIZ, and an ‘insignificant’ effect on visual amenity of the small area of pastoral land required for the roundabout. Ms Snodgrass advises that in her opinion there will be an ‘insignificant’ effect on landscape character due to the proximity and influence of the SHA. Ms Snodgrass provides no definition of the term ‘insignificant’.
- 2.2 Overall, I understand Ms Snodgrass to be of the view that the proposed roundabout will not generate any greater level of landscape effects to those anticipated by the original ‘T’ intersection that forms part of CIZ. I concur with Ms Snodgrass’s assessment in this regard.
- 2.3 Importantly, the roundabout will not disturb the balance of open space to built development anticipated along the eastern side of SH6, nor undermine the function of the open space area as a buffer for the industrial zone. I agree with Ms Snodgrass that the roundabout will not impact on the visibility of CIZ from the State Highway 6 (SH6) and that the urban character of the nearby SHA development suggests a contextual fit for the roundabout. I also note that the roundabout will not impact on noteworthy landform or vegetation features.
- 2.4 On balancing these considerations, adverse landscape effects associated with the roundabout are rated as **very low**.¹

3 UGB/ONL Mapping

- 3.1 As demonstrated in **Figure 1** below, the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan Decisions Version (**PDP DV**) mapping reveals a ‘conflict’ between the Urban Growth Boundary (**UGB**) (and the Coneburn Zone boundary) (red dashed line in **Figure 1**) and the Outstanding Natural Landscape boundary (brown dashed line in **Figure 1**).
- 3.2 Chapter 4 of the PDP forms part of the strategic intentions of the District Plan and guides planning and decision making for urban growth and development within the District. The Chapter 4 Purpose explains the important role that the quality of the landscape plays with respect to the social and

¹ Using a seven-point effects rating scale: **very low** | **low** | **moderate-low** | **moderate** | **moderate-high** | **high** | **very high**, with **moderate-low** corresponding to a ‘minor effect’ and **high** and **very high** corresponding to a ‘significant’ adverse effect.

economic wellbeing of the District. Policy seeks to define UGBs that protect the values of ONFs and ONLs.

- 3.3 The application of this policy approach across the District has led to a general preference to delineate UGBs outside of ONF/Ls² which makes sense from a landscape perspective, as it avoids the competing imperatives of enabling urban development and protecting landscape values.



Figure 1: QLDC Proposed District Plan Decisions Version mapping. Red dashed line corresponds to **Urban Growth Boundary**. Brown dashed line corresponds to **ONL boundary**.

- 3.4 It should be noted that the DV Coneburn Structure Plan (**Figure 2** below) anticipates *Open Space - No buildings or structures* land use within this part of the Coneburn Industrial zone. Therefore, amending the UGB or ONL boundaries to better align in the part of the zone will not impact on the potential for development within the zone.

44.7 Structure Plan

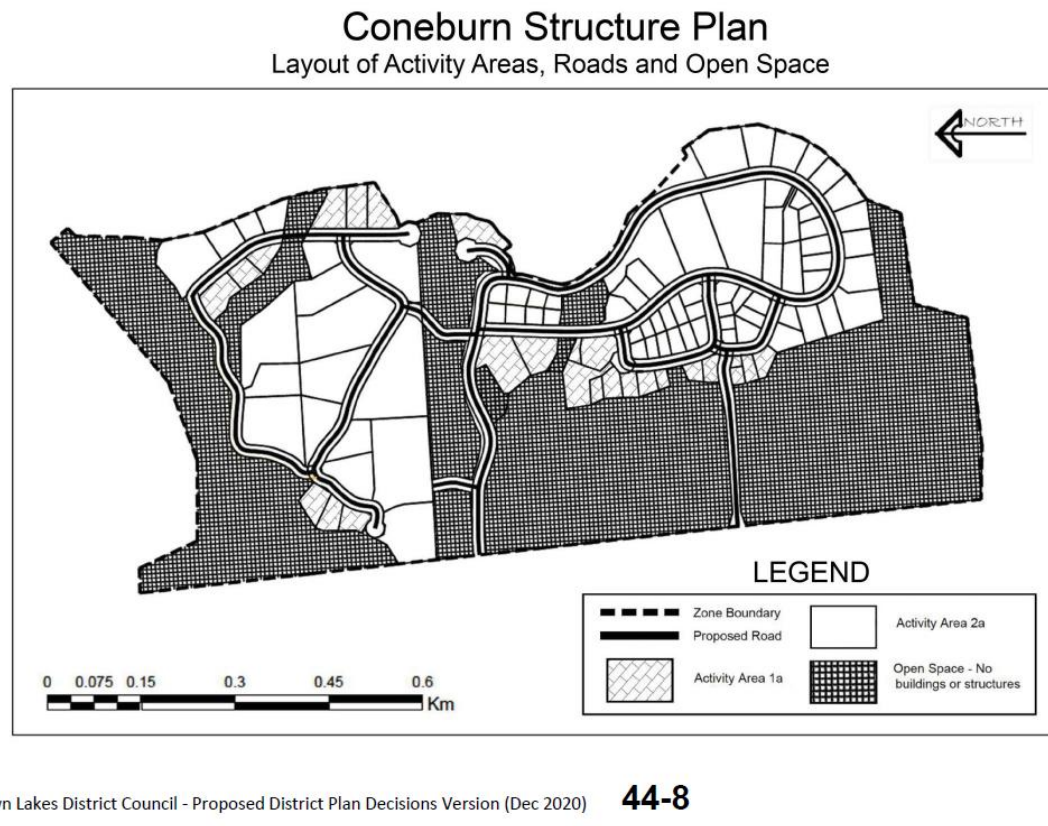


Figure 2: QLDC Proposed District Plan Decisions Version Coneburn Structure Plan.

- 3.5 In my opinion, there are two options available to the Council to remedy the current UGB/ONL mapping conflict:
- a) Amend the ONL boundary so that it aligns with the UGB (and Coneburn Industrial Zone boundary).
 - b) Amend the UGB (and Coneburn Industrial Zone boundary) so that it aligns with the ONL boundary.
- 3.6 This section of my Memorandum will consider the potential landscape effects of each of these options. It does not, however, assess the appropriateness or otherwise of the UGB and ONL boundaries as currently mapped in the DV PDP. (Luke - the reason I include this clarification is that from a landscape perspective, and in an ideal world, both boundaries would align with the watercourse in this location as it forms a clearly legible defensible edge.)

Amend the ONL boundary so that it aligns with the UGB (and Coneburn Industrial Zone boundary)

- 3.7 The key test to apply in considering the landscape effects of amending the ONL boundary so that it realigns with the UGB (and Coneburn Industrial Zone boundary) is whether this change will protect the landscape values of the ONL.
- 3.8 The relevant ONL relates to the Remarkables mountain range. The preparation of a schedule of landscape values for a number of identified (i.e. mapped) priority area ONF/Ls (and Upper Clutha RCL areas) has been directed by the Topic 2: Rural Landscapes Interim Decision 2.9.³ The western (and northern) side of the Remarkables Range has been identified by the Court as one of the 'priority areas' and is referred to as PA Western Remarkables. The author and Ms Helen Mellsop⁴ have been engaged by Council to prepare the priority area ONF/L Schedules, with the project due for completion in early 2022. To date, a DRAFT Methodology Statement has been prepared, (including Schedule templates) and three 'sample' schedules have been completed to test the methodology West Wanaka ONL, Kawarau River ONF and Mt Barker/Cardrona River RCL).
- 3.9 The mapping in **Figure 3** below illustrates that the PA Western Remarkables corresponds to the entire western side of the Remarkables Range north of Wye Creek. This is a spectacular and expansive landscape that is critical to the identity of Queenstown and the broader District.



Figure 3: PA ONF/L mapping approved by the Environment Court. The PA Western Remarkables applies to the green overlay area across the western side of the Remarkables extending from Wye Creek to the Frankton label.

³ [2021] NZEnvC 124.

⁴ With Landscape Expert Peer Review input by Mr Brad Combs of Isthmus.

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- 3.10 Very briefly, key landscape values associated with the PA Western Remarkables centre on:
- the jagged peaks and rugged, near vertical mountain slopes that are highly memorable, strongly expressive of the landscape’s formative processes and display very high transient values;
 - the elevated alluvial fans extending from the mountain faces into the Coneburn Valley that are geologically significant and highly expressiveness of the landscape’s formative processes;
 - its pockets of indigenous vegetation; the importance of the area to iwi as evidenced by the Wāhi Tūpuna overlay that applies to much of the area⁵;
 - the signature views to the western side of the Remarkables Range from Queenstown (including the airport, as a gateway to Queenstown), Jacks Point, Lake Wakatipu and State Highway 6 (SH 6); and
 - the recreational values of the area (skiing, hiking, rock climbing).
- 3.11 The proposed ONL mapping amendment relates to a triangular 2,500m² area of land that coincides with a portion of an unnamed stream draining westwards from the ranges to low-lying land in the vicinity of Woolshed Road (on the western side of the SH 6).
- 3.12 A sparse grouping of scattered trees and shrubs is evident in aerial photographs of the triangular area. The character and quality of this vegetation has not been specifically evaluated, although it is noted that this vegetation patterning is evident both within and outside the ONL (suggesting that it is not determinative of ONL values in its own right, or instrumental in influencing the alignment of the ONL boundary).
- 3.13 In a similar vein, the stream that passes through the triangular area is evident both within and outside the ONL mapping, suggesting that it too is not determinative of ONL values in its own right, or instrumental in influencing the alignment of the ONL boundary.
- 3.14 The triangular area is expected to be indiscernible in views from Queenstown, State Highway 6, Jacks Point, Lake Wakatipu, and the Remarkables Ski Field Access Road as a consequence of its small scale (extent) and low-lying location (i.e. on the Coneburn Valley floor, rather than within the ranges ‘proper’).
- 3.15 Put another way, the triangular area plays little to no role in shaping the landscape values of PA Western Remarkables due to its very small scale (relative to the ONL), its visually indistinct character and the absence of noteworthy landscape elements, patterns, and processes.
- 3.16 For these reasons, it is my opinion that the proposed amendment to the ONL boundary to align with the UGB line will protect the landscape values of the ONL.

⁵ Noting that the Wāhi Tūpuna overlay does not apply to the triangular area of land where an ONL mapping amendment is being considered.

Amend the UGB (and Coneburn Industrial Zone boundary) so that it aligns with the ONL.

- 3.17 Amending the UGB (and Coneburn Industrial Zone boundary) so that it aligns with the ONL boundary will not disturb the existing ONL mapping and, in so doing, will protect the landscape values of the ONL.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 In conclusion, adverse landscape effects associated with the proposed roundabout are rated as **very low**.
- 4.2 With respect to the conflict between the UGB (and Coneburn Industrial Zone boundary) and the ONL boundary, amending the ONL boundary so that it aligns with the UGB (and Coneburn Industrial Zone boundary) or amending the UGB (and Coneburn Industrial Zone boundary) so that it aligns with the ONL boundary will protect the landscape values of the ONL.

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