

21.23.12 Sheepskin Creek: Schedule of Landscape Values

General Description of the Area

The Sheepskin Creek area is located on the northern lower slopes of the Pisa Range. The northern and eastern boundary coincides with SH 6 (Luggate Cromwell Road) and the boundary of the area addressed in 21.23.11 Luggate. The eastern and southern boundary is defined by the District boundary and the western / north-western boundary abuts Lake McKay Station and Environs PA (ONL). Overall, the area forms part of an ice-eroded shoulder on the northern slopes of the Pisa Range, with glacial outwash terraces and schist escarpments to the north. The plateau extends west into the ONL and eastwards into the rural living area of Queensberry (within Central Otago District) located immediately to the east.

Physical Attributes and Values

Geology and Geomorphology • Topography and Landforms • Climate and Soils • Hydrology • Vegetation • Ecology • Settlement • Development and Land Use • Archaeology and Heritage • Mana whenua

Landforms and land types

1. The area is located on the northern lower slopes of the Pisa / Criffel Range. This range forms the westernmost and highest element of the characteristic 'basin and range' fault block landscape that stretches across Central Otago. The northern end of the range is characterised by an ice-eroded shoulder that defines the southern enclosure of the Upper Clutha Basin. Within this shoulder, moraines form smoother surfaces between rocky outcrops and hummocks, and deeply cut gullies are associated with contemporary streams.
2. The lower margin of the shoulder, south and east of Luggate, and within which the area is located, has ice-scoured terrain with rock exposures and fluviially formed escarpments and terraces leading down to the basin floor.

Hydrological features

3. The series of tributaries draining from the terraces to Sheepskin Creek (to the west) and the unnamed stream in the vicinity of Queensberry (to the east and south), all flowing directly to Mata-au (Clutha River).

Ecological features and vegetation types

4. Particularly noteworthy indigenous vegetation features include:
 - a. Extensive areas of improved pasture and lucerne cropping that are favourable seasonal feeding grounds for paradise shelduck, South Island oystercatcher, black-billed gull and spur-winged plover.
 - b. An evergreen shelterbelt on a roughly north-south alignment through the centre of the lower sloping terrace and shelter / amenity plantings around rural living dwellings in the northern portion of the area.
5. Kānuka scrub and shrubland and rocky outcrops are valued habitat for skinks and geckos, a wide range of invertebrate species, and native birds (including New Zealand falcon, hawk, South Island tomtit, grey warbler, fantail, and silvereye).

Land use patterns and features

6. SH6 which traverses the southern edge, linking between Wānaka / Luggate and Cromwell.

7. Pastoral farming or cropping, with pivot irrigation on the smoother terrace slopes, and low intensity grazing across steeper areas. Properties tend to be larger than 20ha and/or part of much bigger landholdings. The exception to this is along the toe of the escarpment adjacent SH6, where there is a small grouping of rural living lots ranging in size from approximately 2ha to 3ha.
8. Earthworks and built modifications are generally limited to fencing, farm tracks, stockyards, irrigation ponds, shared accessways, and rural living dwellings (on the northern kānuka-covered rise and the flats near SH6).
9. Neighbouring land uses which have an influence on the landscape character of the area due to their scale, character, and/or proximity include:
 - a. Rural living development throughout the Queensberry area immediately to the east of the area (and within Central Otago District). This includes two formed rights of way: Mahana Lane and Puningia Lane (gravel surface); to the south boundary of the area (District boundary). Houses are generally located in localised hollows of the elevated terraces and slopes with variable degrees of success evident in relation to their visual integration, particularly in more distant views. Much of the accessway and public road network (Pukerangi Drive chipseal surface) is visible from the surrounding area. Overall, the proliferation of rural living houses and accessways confers the impression of a rural living zoning.
 - b. The McKay Station and Environs PA (ONL) to the west as a predominantly unmodified, highly expressive, memorable, and appealing area.

Archaeological and heritage features and their locations

10. Hut remains potentially associated with the historic mining or pastoralism (archaeological site G40/175).

Mana whenua features and their locations

11. The entire area is ancestral land to many whānau within the iwi of Kāi Tahu whānui and, as such, all landscape is significant, given that whakapapa, whenua, and wai are all intertwined in te ao Māori.

Associative Attributes and Values

Mana whenua creation and origin traditions • Mana whenua associations and experience • Mana whenua metaphysical aspects such as mauri and wairua • Historic values • Shared and recognised values • Recreation and scenic values

Mana whenua associations and experience

12. Kāi Tahu whakapapa connections to whenua and wai generate a kaitiaki duty to uphold the mauri of all important landscape areas.

Historic attributes and values

13. The area is representative of the type of high-country landscape that endured as a pastoral run used for low-intensity stock grazing from the mid-19th century through into the 20th century (unlike other, less-marginal areas that began to be farmed more intensively).
14. The area was likely subject to some early goldmining, though restricted water availability would have limited the land's viability.
15. The area likely encompasses of an early European communication route branching off from the Luggate-Cromwell Road.

Shared and recognised attributes and values

16. Valued as an integral part of the distinctive and visually prominent southern enclosure of the Upper Clutha Basin.
17. Identity as an open and spacious, relatively undeveloped, and predominantly 'working' rural buffer between the undeveloped ONL landscape to the west and south, and the rural living landscape of the Queensberry area in the neighbouring district to the east.
18. The lower escarpment and portion of the area adjacent the highway is valued as a scenic rural gateway to the district from the south, and as part of the rural entrance to Luggate and the Upper Clutha Basin.

Perceptual (Sensory) Attributes and Values

Legibility and Expressiveness • Views to the area • Views from the area • Naturalness • Memorability • Transient values • Remoteness / Wildness • Aesthetic qualities and values

Legibility and expressiveness attributes and values

19. History of extensive pastoral farming has resulted in an open character and highly legible landform, reinforced by the patterning of indigenous vegetation in stream gullies and across escarpments. The relative openness of the upper slopes and escarpments allows the processes of land formation to be easily perceived. The landscape is clearly expressive of the uplift, glacial, and fluvial processes that have formed it.

Particularly important views to and from the area

20. Limited public accessibility means that closer views of the area are generally limited to views of the lower escarpment and terrace adjoining the Upper Clutha Basin floor from SH6 and views of the upper sloping terraces from the Queensberry rural living area to the east (outside of the district). From SH6, short to mid-range views across the lower (highway edge) terrace are seen backdropped by the kānuka and scrub dominated escarpment. Scattered shade trees and amenity plantings screen views of the majority of rural living dwellings in this part of the area, and the balance of the area is screened from view by intervening landforms. In views from the Queensberry rural living area, the upper sloping terraces read as part of the more expansive working rural landscape that dominates the mid slopes of the Pisa Range.
21. The area is widely visible from more distant vantage points across the basin, including Kane Road, Luggate - Tarras Road (SH8A), and parts of the Upper Clutha River Trail, the Grandview Ridge Track, and the Deep Gully Track. From these vantage points, the area reads as part of the coherent and distinctly rural mid-ground to the higher peaks of the Pisa Range. The rough vegetation-covered upper escarpments and stream gullies contrast with the colour and texture of improved pasture on the sloping terraces, enhancing the legibility of the landscape and providing visual complexity and interest. From these viewpoints, the area reads as a continuous part of the mountainous enclosure of the basin.

Naturalness attributes and values

22. Perceptions of naturalness and of working rural character are largely maintained for people visiting the landscape, although this is undermined by the presence of pivot irrigation infrastructure, driveways, gateways, signage, and the like.
23. Natural patterns and process are particularly strong in the regenerating kānuka woodland and shrubland areas, and on the steeper slopes. Rocky outcrops add to perceptions of naturalness.
24. Overall, there is a moderate-high level of naturalness. Human intervention as intensively managed farmland and rural living is evident. The close proximity of the more undeveloped mountain context contributes a moderating influence with respect to the perception of naturalness.

Memorability attributes and values

25. The memorability of the area as part of the Pisa Range, enclosing the Upper Clutha Basin to the south, and contrasting strongly with the long horizontals of the basin outwash plain.
26. Memorable to residents and locals as part of the 'gateway' to the Upper Clutha Basin (and the Cromwell/Lake Dunstan valley) and as part of the rural entrance to Luggate.

Transient attributes and values

27. Important transient attributes include the play of light on the open landforms, changing snow cover, the changing colour of pasture vegetation and crops across the seasons, and the presence of stock and wildlife such as hawks.

Remoteness and wildness attributes and values

28. Some remoteness and wildness experienced within the working farmland (albeit noting that this is not publicly accessible).

Aesthetic attributes and values

29. The experience of all of the values identified above from public and private viewpoints.
30. More specifically, this includes:
 - a. the juxtaposition and contrast between the smooth pastoral 'tamed' appearance of the sloping terraces, and the rougher escarpment, rock outcrop, and gully areas;
 - b. strong rural character, with an impression of openness (where there is pastoral or cropping uses), a sense of spaciousness, and very limited rural living development; and
 - c. the play of light and shadow on the landform.

Summary of Landscape Values

Physical • Associative • Perceptual (Sensory)

Rating scale: seven-point scale ranging from **Very Low** to **Very High**.

very low	low	low-mod	moderate	mod-high	high	very high
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The physical, associative, and perceptual attributes and values described above for the Sheepskin Creek area can be summarised as follows:

31. **Moderate physical values** relating to the sequence of terraces, rock outcrops, escarpments and gullies, the regenerating grey shrubland and kanuka, the productive soils (with irrigation) and associated agricultural land uses, and the strong patterns of rural land use.
32. **Moderate associative values** relating to the mana whenua associations of the area, and the shared and recognised values of the area for residents and locals as part of the gateway/rural edge to the Wānaka valley and Luggate, and as a rural buffer between development at Queensberry and the ONL.
33. **Moderate-high perceptual values** relating to the open character and resulting legible and expressive display of topography, the coherence of vegetation and land use patterns, the rural character, the expansive scenic views to the area from the Upper Clutha Basin which reads as part of the broader northern shoulder of the Pisa Range, and the moderate-high level of naturalness.

Landscape Capacity

The landscape capacity of the Sheepskin Creek area for a range of activities is set out below.

- i. **Commercial recreational activities** – **some** landscape capacity for small-scale and low-key activities that: are located to optimise the screening and/or filtering benefit of natural landscape elements; designed to be of a small scale and 'low-key' rural character; integrate landscape restoration and enhancement (where appropriate); and enhance public access (where appropriate).
- ii. **Visitor accommodation and tourism related activities** – **limited** landscape capacity for visitor accommodation activities that are located to optimise the screening and/or filtering benefit of natural landscape elements; designed to be of a small scale and 'low-key' rural character; integrate landscape restoration and enhancement (where appropriate); and enhance public access (where appropriate). **Extremely limited** landscape capacity for tourism related activities that are: visually recessive; designed to be small scale and have a low key 'rural' character; integrate landscape restoration and enhancement (where appropriate); and enhance public access (where appropriate).
- iii. **Urban expansions** – **extremely limited or no** landscape capacity.
- iv. **Intensive agriculture** – **some** landscape capacity on the terraces where the quality of views and aesthetic attributes and values are maintained or enhanced.
- v. **Earthworks** – **limited** landscape capacity to absorb earthworks associated with trails, farming and rural living/visitor accommodation/tourism related activities that maintain naturalness and expressiveness values and integrate with existing natural landform patterns.
- vi. **Farm buildings** – **some** landscape capacity for modestly scaled buildings that reinforce the existing rural character.
- vii. **Mineral extraction** – **very limited** landscape capacity for farm-scale quarries that that maintain or enhance the quality of views, naturalness values and aesthetic values.
- viii. **Transport infrastructure** – **very limited** landscape capacity for modestly scaled and low-key 'rural' roading that is positioned to optimise the integrating benefits of landform and vegetation patterns.
- ix. **Utilities and regionally significant infrastructure** – **limited** landscape capacity for additional district-scale infrastructure that is buried or located such that they are screened from external view. In the case of utilities such as overhead lines or cell phone towers which cannot be screened, these should be designed and located so that they are not visually prominent. In the case of the National Grid, **limited** landscape capacity in circumstances where there is a functional or operational need for its location and structures are designed and located to limit their visual prominence, including associated earthworks. **Very limited** capacity for other larger-scale regionally significant infrastructure.
- x. **Renewable energy generation** – **some** landscape capacity for small-scale wind or solar generation located where topography or mature vegetation ensures it is not highly visible from public places. **Extremely limited** landscape capacity for larger-scale commercial renewable energy generation.
- xi. **Forestry** – **limited** landscape capacity for scattered woodlots of up to 2 hectares in area.
- xii. **Rural living** – **very limited** landscape capacity to absorb additional rural living without adverse effects on associative and perceptual values. The working rural character of the area is vulnerable to fragmentation and 'domestication' through rural living development. Any additional rural living should be located on the lower-lying land towards the northern part of the area; set well back from roads; co-located with existing development; integrated by existing landform and/or existing vegetation; designed to be of a small scale and 'low-key' rural character; integrate landscape restoration and enhancement (where

appropriate); enhance public access (where appropriate); and should maintain the impression of rural views from public vantage points (including views from the highway).

Plant and Animal Pests

- A. Plant pest species include sweet briar and hawthorn.
- B. Animal pest species include rabbits, hares, pigs, goats, stoats, feral cats, possums, hedgehogs, rats, and mice.