

Proposed urban intensification variation Arrowtown.

Submission.

Submitter: Gavin Evans.

I am opposed to the proposed variation entirely.

History:

The Evans family have been crib owners in Villiers Street since 1959, when my parents purchased the site, built a bunk house and framework for the main building on the farm at Hedgehope, Southland, and transported those to Arrowtown.

The family have spent the following years on working bees and holidays since, and my wife and I have now moved permanently to live at Villiers Street. Our family has been involved in the fabric of life in Arrowtown, observed the gradual growth and development and enjoyed the vibrancy and character of this village. We do not consider this proposed variation to have any merit or enhancement values for Arrowtown.

Council:

Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) have not provided sufficient consultation for this variation. This is a substantial change for residents to absorb and deserves far greater input from Council.

There has been only one public meeting attended by councillors that was advertised as an open forum meeting but changed at the last minute to address form only. This diminished the value of the meeting, allowed less debate and insufficient question time, making it difficult for those attending to obtain quality information to allow for informed decision making.

Further, QLDC has failed to fully advise residents of the outcomes likely should this proposed variation proceed. There are implications for an aging and inadequate infrastructure, insufficient green spaces, the need for additional business, such as grocery, fuel stations, butchers, etc.

QLDC has discretion on how and when to apply the NPS-UD rules but has failed to recognise that applying them to Arrowtown is incorrect.

- The Ministry for the Environment has stated that for urban intensification there are exceptions where the population at the 2018 census is below 5000, then that area can be excluded. Arrowtown had 2950 in that census, thus should be excluded from this proposed variation.
- Further, Council has failed to give sufficient weight to existing documentation concerning housing and future development in the Arrowtown area. The Arrowtown Design Guidelines 2016, Shaping our Future – Arrowtown Village, QLDC District Plan, and Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan are all previously published documents developed through extensive consultations workshops and meetings. Further, The QLDC Housing Development Capacity Assessment 2021 Report (HDCA) identifies that the district has sufficient feasible, and reasonably expected to be realised, development capacity to provide for projected housing demand for the short, medium and long term. However, although the capacity meets the requirements of the NPS-UD (in terms of provision of future zoned capacity), the 2021 HDCA report identified a shortfall of housing in price bands below \$500k and it highlights that housing affordability shortfalls are set to worsen if there are no interventions intensification areas, and to ensure that development can be appropriately serviced, including measures to address stormwater runoff.

- Arrowtown is not recognised as a priority development area in the Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan.

Adverse Effects:

In the largest sense, this proposal is detrimental to the character of Arrowtown and will have significant adverse effects on it. It has old town characteristics and development as suggested is not in keeping with that. It has a simple, uncluttered layout, a mix of housing styles with many gardens, shrubs, and large trees to view and admire. There is a mix of old and new with a large area identified as historic, and the 60's/70's style cribs showing mono pitch roofs still mixed in with the newer style houses built more recently.

The Autumn Festival is a showcase event, with many visitors here to admire and photograph the outstanding golden colours of the trees and shrubs that abound in the village and the surrounding hills, enjoy food and drink, plus try some shopping along the main street. The proposed variation will add nothing to that.

Arrowtown is a destination, not a drive through location. It's a mix of mainly single-story dwellings, incorporating timber, brick, schist, stacked stone or mud and stone walls. Typically, each section has a single dwelling with lawns, specimen trees and large flower beds and gardens. Corrugated iron roofing is a strong identifier as well.

Arrowtown is separate from Queenstown and is not a suburb of the latter. It has a clearly identifiable history as a gold mining town, with many remnants of the past located throughout the village and admired by all who visit. There is a part of Arrowtown that is identified as historic, with many old stone cottages, lean-to sheds, the Chinese village, the original Police Station, Gaol, gardens, and trees that provide a glimpse to the past. The proposed variation cannot add to that.

- The proposed variation will reduce sunlight around any new building, particularly to the nearest neighbours, create shading where none existed before, diminish privacy for neighbours and reduce greenspace surrounding the building. Lawns and gardens will either not exist or be minimal at best. There will be less open space ground to absorb run-off from rain, thus increasing pressure on the existing storm water systems. This is not in keeping with Arrowtown's culture.
- A lack of off-street parking. Usually, the typical 3 story townhouse has minimal resident parking, with this in keeping with the purpose of medium density housing encouraging a step change for residents to bike, walk or use public transport.
- Diminishes adjacent housing values.
- NPS-UD Policy 6: When making planning decisions that affect urban environments, decision-makers have particular regard to the following matters: the planned urban built form anticipated by those RMA planning documents that have given effect to this National Policy Statement that the planned urban built form in those RMA planning documents may involve significant changes to an area, and those changes: 12 National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 – updated May 2022 (i) may detract from amenity values appreciated by some people but improve amenity values appreciated by other people, communities, and future generations, including by providing increased and varied housing densities and types; and (ii) **are not**, of themselves, an adverse effect.
- The proposed variation is an adverse effect for Arrowtown, because of its iconic, mining town appearance.

Infrastructure:

The proposal adds increased pressure on Bus, water, sewage, storm water, power, mail, waste, Fire Brigade, phone, internet services, community facilities, sport, and recreation facilities.

The Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan recognises that meeting the costs of infrastructure needed to cater for the combined needs of residents and visitors is placing pressure on the rating base and is reaching the limits of how much a small Council can sustainably afford.

Some infill development is putting pressure on social infrastructure and facilities. This pressure results in fewer opportunities to interact with neighbours, friends, and families. The proposed plan variation does not diminish these social problems.

- Bus Services – currently providing a daily regular service on limited-service lines, including Arrowtown. This is a daylight service only and doesn't include night services which would cater for night shift workers. Any service expansion requires a substantial capital investment for additional buses, drivers, base facilities, refuelling capacity, support staff (Administrative, Health & Safety, Training, relief drivers). These costs lie with Otago Regional Council as the main provider, and ultimately a share will fall back on its ratepayers, many of whom live in Arrowtown.
- Water, storm water & Sewage – there has been no substantive statements made by Council as to reliability of supply, nor whether these services could cope with increased demand. The Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan lists several infrastructure facilities that are planned for upgrades or development but are mainly in the 4 -10-year future plans.
- Fire Service infrastructure – is there sufficient water volume and pressure, particularly to service up to 3 stories in a multi tenanted building, if it's on fire?
There have been 170 callouts for the Arrowtown station since 1st January 2023, which have been serviced by volunteers. Has there been any discussions held with the Fire Service and the officers of Arrowtown Brigade as to both expansion of staffing and station capacity?
Is there a need for a new station containing a larger engine room, enhanced training and office quarters, and more car parks? The current station site is unsuitable for any re-development.
- There is no information available to show expanded green space areas to support an increase in population, should the variation proceed.
- There is insufficient information available on the quantity and types of infrastructure that would need upgrading to support this variation.

Summary:

There are sufficient reasons listed above for Council to consider and withdraw this proposal. Arrowtown is a special place, an iconic village that is a tourist destination that deserves special protection.

The proposed variation does not add value to Arrowtown's image, nor is it worthy of such careless treatment by QLDC.

Thank-you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Gavin Evans.

1 October 2023.