

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource management Act (~~Act~~)

AND

IN THE MATTER of the submission by Bobs Cove Development Limited on the QLDC Proposed District Plan 2015 (Stream 13) to rezone a piece of land from Rural General to Rural Residential

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF STEPHEN SKELTON FOR
Bobs Cove Development Limited (Submitter #712)**

9th June 2017



INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Stephen Russell Skelton. I have the qualifications of a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Northern Arizona University and a Masters of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University. I am the Director of Patch Limited (**Patch**), a landscape architecture and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and am the acting chairman of the Southern Branch.
2. I have been involved in landscape consultancy work in the Queenstown Lakes District area for over 4 years, working in both the public and private sector. I held the position of landscape planner with Lakes Environmental before it was absorbed by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**) in 2013. I then held the position of landscape architect at a private practice based in Queenstown before opening my own practice in June 2016. My work includes all facets of landscape architecture and landscape planning through the range of small and large scale projects. Over the last year, my work at Patch has included master planning, commercial and residential design, preparation of native restoration planting plans, preparation of landscape management plans, preparation of landscape assessments for resource consent applications and the preparation and presentation of evidence for Council and District Plan Review hearings.
3. I am professionally familiar with the values of the rural, rural living and urban landscapes in the Queenstown Lakes District. I am familiar with the Strategic Direction (chapter 3), landscape (chapter 4), and rural general provisions of the Proposed District Plan. I am also familiar with the operative district plan, including the various rural visitor zones set out in Section 12.
4. In preparing this evidence I have reviewed the submission by Bons Cove Development Limited and the landscape evidence prepared by Dr Marion Read dated 24 May 2017.
5. I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. This evidence has been prepared in accordance with it and I agree to comply with it. I have not omitted to



consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

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6. This submission seeks to rezone .34ha of Rural zoned to Rural Residential. The site is located at the southwest edge of the Bobs Cove Subzone. It is part of the Bobs Cove landscape, west of Queenstown near the Glenorchy . Queenstown Road.
7. The Bobs Cove landscape has been subject to over a hundred years of human modification and decades of resource consents which has resulted in a mix of pastoral, rural residential and natural elements. A Rural Residential Zone (**RRZ**) and the Bobs Cove Subzone overlay parts of the Bobs Cove landscape.
8. The geomorphology of the landscape is unique to the District in that the underlying rock is partially composed of limestone and the cove between this limestone intrusion and the more dramatic schist mountains creates a distinct feature of Lake Wakatipu. The land cover of the Bobs Cove is composed of a unique interplay of pastoral spaces, rural elements, scattered eucalyptus trees, pristine and regenerating native forest, natural shorelines and cultivated rural character trees. Rural residential development is widespread across much of the landscape and is well contained by landforms and vegetation.
9. Overall the Bobs Cove landscape conveys a highly valued cultural and natural character situated between the more settled landscapes associated with Queenstown to the east and more wild lands to the west.
10. This submission seeks to extend the RRZ into a portion of land (the BCDL site) adjacent to the Bobs Cove Subzone. This land parcel is being created as part of a land exchange between the submitter and the Department of Conservation (**DOC**). The submitter owns a forested, freehold and Rural Residential zoned parcel of land (the DOC site) near the Glenorchy . Queenstown Road corridor and the Bobs Cove Track carpark which DOC



wishes to acquire. Both lots are equal areas, but the DOC site has significantly higher open space and nature conservation values.

11. I am currently preparing a landscape assessment report which will accompany a subdivision and land use resource consent application for the BCDL site.

EVIDENCE OF DR MARION READ

12. Dr Marion Read has provided a brief statement of evidence with regards to this submission. Dr Read considers that the rezoning would extend the built form slightly and that any effects which this rezoning would have on the landscape quality and character or on visual amenity would be insignificant in extent.¹

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED RR ZONE

13. As stated above, the landscape has a distinct mix of pastoral, natural and rural residential characters set within a wider lake and mountain landscape. I consider the wider landscape which holds the RRZ to be part of an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) and I assess the proposal as such.

Landscape Quality and Character

14. The proposed extension of the RRZ into a small area of regenerating forest will result in the removal of some native vegetation. This clearing will be insignificant in the scale of the wider pattern of native vegetation and the surrounding, forested land will maintain the dominant natural character.
15. The proposed extension of the RRZ will see development continued a small distance across an elevated lake terrace. The site will be accessed via a shared driveway. I consider that the proposed extension of the RRZ will not exacerbate any existing adverse effects on the landscape's quality and character.

¹ Evidence of Dr Marion Read, 24 May 2017, page 81, paragraph 14.16

16. It is worth noting that the DOC site near the trailhead forms part of a highly natural landscape embodied in what appears to be remnant indigenous forest which extends from near the trailhead to the west. The mature vegetation within this site and the public appreciation of it provide a quality which is highly valued within the District's landscapes. By not developing this RRZ land the landscape quality and character of the DOC can be maintained.

Visual Amenity

17. The BCDL site is visible from parts of the Queenstown . Glenorchy Road (**Attachment B**), the Bobs Cove Track (**Attachment C**) and the surface of Lake Wakatipu (**Attachment D**). The proposed extension to the RRZ will not increase the threshold of visual development as seen from any public place. The site is visible only in tandem with other existing development and future development will not increase the prominence of built for within the landscape. I consider that the small increase in the RRZ will not adversely effect the visual amenity and that the overall visual dominance of the natural landscape will be maintained.

CONCLUSION

18. This submission seeks to establish a RRZ on a .34ha area of land immediately adjacent to the existing Bobs Cove Subzone. This parcel of land is being created under a subdivision consent and is being swapped for a parcel of land near the Bobs Cove trailhead, which is equal in area but holds higher natural landscape values.
19. The proposed RRZ will be sited immediately adjacent to existing rural residential type development and the effects of residential development on the landscape will be amalgamated with existing and residual development. I agree with Dr Read that the proposed extension to the RRZ will result in insignificant adverse effects on the landscape character and quality or on visual amenity.



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June 9, 2017



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