

**Expert Conferencing – Landscape**

**Joint Witness Statement**

**Attendees:**

Tony Milne – Gibbston Valley Station Limited

Rob Pryor – Queenstown Lakes District Council

**General:**

The statement sets out the extent of matters agreed as at 20 August 2019 between the above experts with respect to landscape and visual matters.

**Relevant Documents:**

1. Proposed QLDC District Plan Chapter 45.

**Matters Agreed:**

1. It is agreed the proposed GVRZ will be developed in an appropriate manner with regard to the maintenance and enhancement of the existing landscape character and amenity values of the GVRZ. It is agreed the following elements and features contribute to the existing landscape character the GVRZ:
  - A valley floor and river terrace that is predominantly pasture interspersed with vineyards and some fruit trees on the southern side of the State Highway. The northern side of the highway is mostly open pasture and grazed. As a result of this the land cover is visually cohesive and provides a working landscape pattern.
  - Exotic amenity and shelter trees are growing in places, these are mostly clustered around buildings and delineate some fence lines but for the most part the landscape character is open.
  - Hillslopes that are typically extensive areas of rough, untended pasture, differentiated from the river terraces and valley floors by a lack of fencing, the presence of scrub (native) with occasional wilding trees and briar rose.
  - Whilst much of the original vegetation within the GVRZ has been modified or removed, the colour and texture of tussock grassland and grey scrub of the farmed hillslopes contribute to the identity of the GVRZ landscape and clearly define the more productive character of the valley floor.

- The Kawarau River is not a dominant character from the State Highway as it has incised a path well below the valley floor.
  - Rock outcrops are a distinctive feature, both on the valley floor and hillsides, contributing to a high legibility of the landscape. Specially the area known as 'The Rocks' and the steep bluff that serves as a pinch point essentially dividing the GVRZ into two separate visual catchments.
  - The bluff is associated with a deeply incised water course identified as Toms Creek. Toms Creek is a recognisable feature that intrudes into the valley floor across the middle of the GVRZ with a moderate - high level of natural character conveyed by a dense cover of riparian and woody exotic vegetation.
  - Distinctive looking commercial development and ancillary infrastructure associated with the winery and cheesery. This is very visible and has a presence on the State Highway.
  - Accommodation – buildings and infrastructure being developed in association with the winery.
  - 'Farm dwellings', ancillary buildings (varying levels of amenity) and associated driveways, yards and planting. These are typically setback approximately 100m on the south side of the State Highway.
2. It is agreed the character of the wider setting of the Gibbston Valley comprises a mix of viticulture, arcadian pastoral, natural features, rural living at varying scales, visitor attractions, historical elements and infrastructure, Given the geographically enclosed nature of the valley the vegetation patterns and level naturalness of the surrounding hill and mountain slopes that are prominent from the GVRZ collectively make up the appreciation of the GVRZ.
3. It is agreed the proposed GVRZ will be developed in an appropriate manner with regard to the maintenance and enhancement of the existing landscape character and values of the GVRZ. The Structure Plan for the Zone in Schedule 45.7 will ensure that development is carried out in an integrated and planned manner and that buildings and activities occur where the landscape can absorb change. This is supported by Objective 45.2.1 and specific Policy 45.2.1.1.

### **Landscape Categorisation**

4. Two small pockets of the proposed GVRZ are located within ONL. The proposed zoning for these as shown on the Structure Plan is Open Space and Recreation Zone (OSR). It is agreed

that the OSR is the appropriate zoning to manage potential effects on the ONL and the Kowarau River Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF). Furthermore, regarding visibility from the Kowarau River, it is agreed that no buildings should be visible from the river in order to protect its wild and scenic values. However, it is also agreed, that any possible view from the Kowarau River would only be a fleeting glance, and this would not be a major adverse effect. We are satisfied the Structure Plan, specifically the location of AA2 in conjunction with the OSR and proposed Zone rules (including Policy 45.2.1.8 and 45.2.18) provide for this.

5. It is agreed the landscape values associated with the ONF and ONL at a District Wide scale will not be adversely affected.

#### **Effects on Landscape Character**

6. The appropriateness of activities, the absorption capacity of the landscape and the effects of the GVRZ are determined by identifying whether the landscape character of the GVRZ will be maintained. The key elements that contribute to the landscape character of the GVRZ are set out in (1) above. It is agreed that the GVRZ will enable a coordinated approach to rural activities and support other non-rural activities in appropriate locations, while the character and landscape values of the GVRZ will not be adversely affected.
7. From a landscape perspective, the list of rules and their related consenting status impose an appropriate level of control on future activities within the GVRZ. Rules and standards including height controls, building coverage and location controls, setbacks, Productive Landscape Planting and Landscape Management Areas (through the Structure Plan) will ensure the enhancement and maintenance of the existing landscape character of the GVRZ. This is supported by Policies 45.2.1.8 – 45.2.9 that require external appearance of buildings to either maintain or enhance overall landscape values and rural character, including the character (as described in (1) above) of existing Activity Areas. It is also noted that built form within the GVRZ, particularly in Activity Area 1 contributes to the existing character of the GVRZ landscape. It is

agreed that the overall intensity of buildings provided for in the Activity Areas are appropriate and do not compromise existing landscape values of those areas.

8. It is acknowledged that Policy 45.2.10 supports the maintenance of landscape values associated with Toms Creek and the use of 'No Build Areas' as shown on the Structure Plan in Schedule 45.7 achieves this.
9. It is agreed that the Structure Plan locates activity areas in locations that have the potential to absorb change i.e. avoiding skylines, ridges, hills and prominent slopes. Rocky outcrops remain unaltered and views of buildings from the Kawarau River will be avoided. Future built form will be sited and grouped to fit into the landscape using the existing topography to minimise visual effects and maintain a coherency with the receiving environment. Natural character, ecological, and archaeological values are acknowledged and maintained on the site with the ability to be experienced by the public.
10. It is agreed the GVRZ rules and standards relating to building, external appearance controls and Activity Area specific maximum height limits will assist in minimising potential adverse visual effects and ensure compatibility with the Gibbston Valley landscape character as anticipated by the Zone.

#### **Productive Landscape Planting, Landscape Management and Open Space areas**

11. It is agreed that the Productive Landscape Planting, Landscape Management and Open Space areas are appropriately located as shown on the Structure Plan. These areas serve the purpose of both individually and collectively providing visual buffering and breathing space between the Activity Areas so as to maintain an overall rural character and high visual amenity values.
12. It is agreed the planting of, and the maintenance of existing plantings within, the Productive Landscape Areas as shown on the Structure Plan will provide an appropriate level of visual mitigation of the proposed development within Activity Areas when viewed from State Highway 6. Furthermore, it is agreed that the vineyards only provide seasonal screening to the lower parts of the buildings. This is considered appropriate as from a landscape perspective full

screening is not required and the seasonality of the vines are an ephemeral and experiential characteristic to be cherished within of the landscape of the GVRZ.

13. While the Landscape Management Areas (LMA) as shown on the Structure Plan will provide some visual mitigation from the Kawarau River, the cycle/pedestrian trail and State Highway 6, it is agreed the LMA's will provide positive benefits through the enhancement of native vegetation and biodiversity within the GVRZ, as required by Policy 45.2.1.15. It is also acknowledged that regarding LMA2, it would be beneficial to keep the planting relatively low to retain open views from SH6 of the Crown Range slopes. It is agreed that to achieve suitable mitigation, the planting within both the PLA's and LMA's is undertaken prior to development within those areas of the GVRZ that is to be mitigated by way of this planting. Policy 45.2.1.6 requires this and this is reflected in Rule 45.5.2.
14. An issue to be mindful of is the potential for greater loss of productive land, and viticulture in Gibbston Valley. It is agreed that the Structure Plan appropriately identifies areas to be planted and managed as productive areas to maintain rural activities and help uphold the rural productivity and rural character of the wider Gibbston area. Furthermore, it is agreed that the Structure Plan appropriately locates development in areas that will not reduce the viticulture capacity of the Gibbston Valley.

#### **Effects on views from State Highway 6**

15. It is agreed that regarding visual effects the most significant views are those from State Highway 6. Buildings viewed from State Highway 6 throughout the Gibbston Valley are not uncommon and not an issue in themselves. The existing Gibbston Valley Winery is a highly visible node of existing development that is a feature in Gibbston Valley that underpins the prominence of viticulture activities. Peregrine Winery is another example of this.
16. Regarding visual outcomes from State Highway 6, the key consideration is that future development will not compromise the underlying landscape values. It is agreed, that this has been in part mitigated through the provision of Productive Landscape Areas, and to a lesser extent, Landscape Management Areas (note Rule 45.5.2 requiring the planting of these prior to

development). Mitigation is also achieved through the spatial location of the Activity Areas and the controls on the Activity Areas through the rules as mentioned in 11 above. It is agreed the Structure Plan illustrates development located in Activity Areas in areas of less visual sensitivity, as mentioned in 3 above, and these are set in a valley landscape of varied topography and existing vegetation which provides further mitigation of visual effects, particularly when viewed from State Highway 6.

### **Conclusion**

17. It is agreed the GVRZ enables appropriate development to occur within Gibbston Valley Station. The GVRZ provisions provide an appropriate outcome while protecting and maintaining landscape values and mitigating visual effects. Therefore, it is agreed the GVRZ can be supported on landscape grounds.



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Tony Milne



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Rob Pryor

27 August 2019