



**Report to Queenstown Lakes District Council on  
appropriate landscape classification  
boundaries within the District, with particular  
reference to Outstanding Natural Landscapes  
and Features: Post review amendments**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 In April 2014 a report on the appropriate landscape classification boundaries within the District, with particular regard to the identification of the Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Features, was presented to Council. This report was peer reviewed by two experienced local Landscape Architects. Ben Espie of Vivian + Espie reviewed the report in regard to the Wakatipu Basin. Anne Steven of Anne Steven Landscape Architect reviewed the report in regard to the Upper Clutha Basin.

1.3 This report aims to update the original in regard to the recommendations made by the two peer reviewers. It does not necessarily adopt all of the recommendations of the reviewers but when it does not, reasons will be given.

## **2.0 Queenstown and the Wakatipu Basin**

2.1 Kawarau River Corridor

2.1.1 Mr Espie fundamentally agrees with the original report that the Kawarau River corridor should be included within the ONF/ONL(Wakatipu Basin). He considers that the part of the riverbank which is zoned Remarkables Park Activity Area 2a should be excluded as it is zoned for public recreational space and includes the expectation of a jetty and ticketing facility. I consider that his argument is sound from the point of view of landscape management and have amended the maps accordingly.

2.2 Frankton Arm

2.2.1 Mr Espie opines that while the Frankton Arm could have its own objectives and policies to reflect the lacustrine character of that area that it should remain zoned Rural General and a part of the ONL of the lake. While I agree that the arm does contribute to the wider landscape character and quality of Kelvin Heights and Goldfield Heights I do not consider that removing its Rural General status would threaten this, particularly if objectives and policies regarding its specific management were developed. Consequently I continue to consider that a subzone or overlay with no landscape classification would be the appropriate method of managing its use.

2.2.2 Mr Espie is correct that the maps are incorrect with regard to the location of the boundary of the Town Centre Waterfront Zone. He opines that, consistent with his position on the Frankton Arm, that the landscape classification of ONL District Wide should apply to all of the

Bay including the area contained within the Town Centre Waterfront Zone. I disagree, but acknowledge that his approach is a valid alternative. I have amended the maps to correctly indicate the boundary of the Town Centre Waterfront Zone.

2.2.3 Mr Espie continues to consider that Queenstown Bay and the Frankton Arm should be managed together under some sort of planning overlay. While I do not disagree with this approach I consider that the area which he has identified in his Appendix 2, which extends from Kelvin Peninsula to Sunshine Bay, is rather too expansive, would considerably increase the area of lake surface to be so managed in the environs of Queenstown. In my opinion this represents a change of such significance that it should only be implemented following a thorough investigation as to the possible effects.

## 2.3 Queenstown Township and Environs

2.3.1 In Paragraph 24 Mr Espie notes that the maps show the entire course of One Mile Creek as being ONL Wakatipu Basin. He notes that the lower gorge includes a car park and an un-zoned legal road which have been included within the ONL on the maps and considers that they should be removed. As the lake and its margins are of a different classification (ONL(DW)) from the higher areas I see nothing to be gained by connecting them and agree that the road corridors should be removed. I have amended the maps to reflect this.

## 2.4 Ferry Hill / Shotover River

2.4.1 Mr Espie opines, in paragraph 26, that it appears that the boundary of the ONL was intended to follow the edge of the Residential Activity Areas of the Quail Rise Zone. This is correct and I adopt the location of the line adjacent to Quail Rise which he proposes. I do not agree with its location to the south of the Quail Rise Zone and continue to consider that the boundary between the Frankton Flats and the ONL of Ferry Hill is correctly located. With regard to the boundary to the east of Hansen Road (and the north of Ferry Hill) this was discussed, but not determined, in the recent Environment Court decision (C177/2014). The decision favoured the view that the boundary should follow the boundary of the Rural Lifestyle Zone, and I have redrawn the location on the maps to reflect this.

## 2.5 Hawthorn Triangle

2.5.1 Mr Espie is correct that the Environment Court heard expert landscape analysis of the area in the Hawthorn Triangle case. It is also the case that the Court did not determine the location

of the boundaries of this area and consequently it remains a matter of fact to be determined by expert analysis.

- 2.5.2 I continue to disagree with Mr Espie as to the correct location of the ORL boundary to the east of the Triangle. I do note, however, that this area which Mr Espie considers to be ORL is subject to possible plan changes which would remove it from the Rural General Zone. I consider that rezoning this area is a better way of managing the ongoing effects on the landscape quality and character in this vicinity than landscape classifications. Consequently I have not amended the maps to include the areas of lower Slope Hill within the ORL.

### **3.0 Upper Clutha Basin**

#### **3.1 Mount Iron**

- 3.1.1 Ms Steven opines that while Mount Iron is correctly classified as an ONF the location of the boundaries requires 'tweaking'. While moving the south eastern boundary to coincide with the cadastral boundary of the Department of Conservation reserve as she proposes extends it away from the margin of the actual feature I agree that, from a management point of view, this makes sense. Ms Steven also considers that the extension of the boundary to follow the cadastral boundaries in the north western corner of the feature creating a penetration into residential development should be excluded because it is not experienced as a part of Mount Iron. While I agree to an extent, it is the case that the residential development in its vicinity, while developed to Low Density Residential standards is largely located on land zoned Rural General. It is also the case that this development is on the feature of Mount Iron. I consider that rezoning this area Low Density Residential would be an appropriate action. Unless this is undertaken I continue to consider that the boundary of the feature should remain along the cadastral boundary. I have modified the maps to reflect Ms Steven's location in the south east.

#### **3.2 Outlet Area**

- 3.2.1 Ms Steven notes that she is in general agreement with the location of the boundaries in the vicinity of the Outlet. She states, however, that the line to the east of the Outlet Road 'lies behind the crest of the ridge form somewhat and includes mainly modified areas including a residential complex and numerous pine trees'. The location of this line was determined during the assessment of the North Lake Plan Change application. It is actually located along the summit of the ridge. It does incorporate numerous pine trees, but it is anticipated that these will be felled as a consequence of the plan change on the adjacent land. The location

of this line was agreed upon by myself and Mr Paddy Baxter, who was the landscape architect working for the applicant in that case, and its location was subsequently accepted by the Commissioners who heard the plan change application. I continue to consider that the boundary is correctly located in this instance.

3.2.2 While Ms Steven agrees that the Open Space Area of Peninsula Bay should be included within the ONL, and a significant portion of the 'Sticky Forest' block, she disagrees with the location of the line through the forest originally proposed. I consider that her justification for locating the line through the forest block along the local high point is appropriate and consider that the location of the line should be amended accordingly.

3.2.3 Ms Steven opines that the line delineating the ONL and VAL to the north of the river was incorrectly located by the Environment Court in C14/2007. She considers that areas of grey shrubland and short tussock grassland on the top of the escarpment should be included, in part because of its status as an acutely threatened environment. While I have sympathy for this argument, I consider this to be too baldly ecological in its basis to justify inclusion within a landscape classification. It may be that these areas warrant protection as significant natural areas but I consider that they are part of a separate landscape to that of the river corridor and consequently continue to consider that this boundary is correctly located.

3.2.4 I do agree with Ms Steven's recommendation that the western wall of the Dublin Bay meltwater channel and its outwash terraces be included within the ONL. These are outstanding areas for the legibility of their physical origins; for their openness and expansiveness; and for their high natural character. I consider that the location of the boundary of the VAL should be amended accordingly.

### 3.3 Hawea River Corridor

3.3.1 Ms Steven opines that the Hawea River, north of Newcastle Road, does not warrant the classification of Outstanding Natural Feature because of the scale of the feature; the lifestyle and farming developments on its banks; and the human control of its flows. She considers that S6A of the RMA91 is a more appropriate provision under which its management should be taken. I concede that all of these points have some validity. Consequently I have amended the maps accordingly.

3.3.2 Ms Steven considers that the Hawea Terminal Moraine scarp should be identified as an Outstanding Natural Feature for its clarity, and visual prominence. I accept her argument

regarding its outstanding quality, but consider it to be a part of the Outstanding Natural Landscape of the Hawea / Clutha confluence. I have amended the maps accordingly.

3.3.3 Ms Steven considers that Camp Hill adjacent to the Hawea River should be identified as an Outstanding Natural Feature as it is a distinctive hard rock island within the Hawea basin floor and it is clad with dense kanuka-grey shrubland vegetation. I agree with her argument and have amended the maps accordingly.

3.3.4 Ms Steven considers that Speargrass Creek Hill should also be identified as an Outstanding Natural Feature. While this hill is a rather striking feature when viewed from SH6 I do not consider that it is distinctive enough to warrant the appellation, being clad, in the main, with pasture and connected to a more extensive and unexceptional ridgeline.

### 3.4 Clutha River Corridor

3.4.1 Ms Steven agrees that the Clutha River corridor is a landscape feature with high legibility, significant native vegetation communities, and high aesthetic values. She does not agree that it should be considered to be an Outstanding Natural Feature, claiming it to be, rather, and Outstanding Natural Landscape. The Oxford Compact Dictionary defines a feature as 'a distinctive or characteristic part of a thing'<sup>1</sup>. I consider that the river corridor is a distinctive part of the glacial and fluvial landscape of the Upper Clutha Basin and continue to consider it correctly identified as an Outstanding Natural Feature.

3.4.2 Ms Steven notes that I have followed the very edge of the enclosing scarp in the location of the boundary line between the landscape of the river corridor and that of the enclosing terraces. She opines that the indigenous dominated grasslands along the fringes of the corridor should also be included. As with the areas discussed above in paragraph 3.2.3 I consider that while these vegetation communities may indeed warrant protection this should be achieved under another mechanism.

3.4.3 Ms Steven considers that, regardless of whether the broader categorisation is ONL or ONF, the Cooper land with its pivot irrigator should be excluded. While I agree that it does not, superficially, have the characteristics which would normally qualify it as belonging to one of these categories, I have adopted Mr Denney's assessment. In any case there is no requirement that the quality of a landscape need be entirely consistent in order to justify its categorisation as ONL or ONF. It is my observation that many landscapes so categorised contain areas which are domesticated and which would, if they were more extensive, form

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford Compact Dictionary. (1996). Oxford University Press: Oxford. P337.

landscapes of lesser quality in their own right. The Cooper land is entirely surrounded by landscape which Ms Steven and I agree to be outstanding, and in my opinion its inclusion within the category is appropriate. Of some relevance to this opinion are the Environment Court Decisions C3/2002 and C73/2002. In the C3/2002 the Court made the point that the RMA91 requires discussion to be focused on landscapes and features and not on landscape units or other, smaller fragments. In the C73/2002 decision the Court attempted to determine the minimum area which could be described as a 'landscape'. Their formula would indicate that this area is not large enough to be a landscape in its own right.

3.4.4 With regard to Luggate, I consider that Ms Steven's comment that development of the land east of Luggate for dairy stock is accurate. Consequently I adopt her line east of Luggate and have amended the maps accordingly.

### 3.5 Mount Brown / Maungawera Valley

3.5.1 With regard to the north eastern side of Mount Brown, I find Ms Steven's argument that it is not sufficiently natural in character or exceptional enough to warrant being classified as an ONL compelling. In addition, it is quite distinct in character from the north western slopes which have a strong relationship with the Lake. Consequently I adopt Ms Steven's line in this vicinity and I have amended the maps accordingly.

3.5.2 Ms Steven opines that the lower hills to the south of the east branch of Quartz Creek, and on the northern side of the Maungawera Valley should be excluded from the ONL. While I acknowledge that they are more modified than the mountains behind them, I remain of the opinion that they are more like those mountains in character and naturalness than the valley floor. I also continue to consider that the inclusion of a part of Quartz Creek itself within the ONL is appropriate given its high natural character; high expressiveness and legibility; and the presence within its margins of dense indigenous vegetation.

### 3.6 Lake Hawea – Mount Grand

3.6.1 Ms Steven opines that the full extent of the terminal moraine along the southern margin of Lake Hawea is not of sufficient quality to warrant ONL status, preferring only to include the lakeward side with the ONL of the Lake. In actual fact, the locations of the two lines are not particularly divergent. Ms Steven has included a small hill to the south of Gladstone and I consider that its inclusion is consistent. Consequently I adopt Ms Steven's line in this regard and have amended the maps accordingly.

3.6.2 With regard to the location of the boundary between Hawea Flat and the ONL of Mount Grand, Ms Steven's and my lines diverge only in minor ways except for in the vicinity of Hospital Creek. I continue to consider that the Hospital Creek outwash fan is too indistinct a feature and too modified by agricultural and other activities to be a part of the ONL. I continue to consider that its character and quality are entirely similar to those of the VAL of the Hawea basin.

3.6.3 Our lines again diverge in the vicinity of Lagoon Creek. This is probably the most difficult area in which to reconcile the different approaches which we have taken. Ms Steven considers that the lower hills, Trig Hill, Ram Hill and Lindis Peak, which are located to the south of Bluenose, Great Rock and Grandview Mountain, should be excluded from the ONL. She argues that they are not distinctive enough or of high enough quality to be considered part of the ONL and makes the point that the district wide landscape assessment undertaken for Central Otago District Council excluded them from the ONL on their side of the district boundaries. Further, in discussion, she also noted that the tenure review reports for Glenfoyle Station do not attribute significance to the landscape of this area. That having been said, the basis of this mapping activity has been to match like with like, rather than to undertake an assessment from first principles. On this basis I still consider that these hills are more similar in character and quality to those further north around Mount Grandview than to the floor of the basin. Consequently I continue to consider that this area should be included within the Outstanding Natural Landscape.

3.6.4 Ms Steven, while excluding the mountains from the ONL wishes to include the Glenfoyle Terrace Scarps as ONF. I consider that her reasoning for this is sound and I have amended the maps accordingly.

3.7 North end of the Pisa and Criffel Ranges

3.7.1 Ms Steven agrees that a portion of the lower slopes of the Pisa Range adjacent to SH6 should be assessed as ONL. She considers, however, that a large portion of the middle slopes, which I do understand to be significantly modified, should be excluded. Again she matches her boundary to that of Central Otago. It is the case, however, that a significant portion of this area was confirmed as ONL in the Bald Developments decision of the Environment Court (C55 / 2009). In that case the Landscape Architects (other than the applicant's) were agreed that the entire face of the Pisa Range was correctly categorised as ONL. Further, it concerns an area almost entirely surrounded by land which we agree to be ONL which is similar to the situation regarding the Cooper land adjacent to the Clutha / Hawea confluence. Just because a portion of an area does not have the qualities of an ONL does not mean that it is not within



an ONL. Further, the area which Ms Steven does consider to be ONL adjacent to the road is, in my opinion, too small to be a landscape and is more aptly described as a complex of rock outcrops and indigenous vegetation. Consequently I do not accept Ms Steven's position and consider the location of the line delineating the ONL should remain as located.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

- 4.1 This report summarises the responses to my original report and proposed maps of Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Features within the Queenstown Lakes District provide by Mr Ben Espie of Vivian+Espie and Ms Anne Steven of Anne Steven Landscape Architect. Both of these practitioners have extensive experience working within the landscape of the District.
- 4.2 As a consequence of these reviews the original maps have been modified. This has been done on the basis of the practitioner input but has remained an exercise of matching like with like. It is not a landscape assessment from first principles, and the results might have been different had this been the brief.
- 4.3 That having been said, it is considered that the final delineations are robust and provide a consistent and thorough mapping of the District.

#### **Read Landscapes**



**Marion Read**

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