

REPORT TO: Vicki Jones, Vision Planning
FROM: Marion Read (Landscape Architect)
REFERENCE: Plan Change 44 – Henley Downs
SUBJECT: Landscape Assessment
DATE: Friday, 28 July 2013

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** A request for a plan change has been made to Queenstown Lakes District Council for an area of approximately 705ha of land located within the Coneburn Valley and on the lower slopes of Peninsula Hill to the west of State Highway 6 (SH 6).
- 1.2** The land is currently zoned Jacks Point Resort Zone in the terms of the QLDC District Plan (the District Plan). The aims of the plan change as summarised from the original request document are as follows:
- to increase permissible residential densities;
 - expand the urban footprint;
 - remove the requirement for commercial activity within Henley Downs;
 - enable the entrance from SH 6 to be along Woolshed Road;
 - require more comprehensive assessment via the Outline Development Plan (ODP);
 - reduce compliance costs to individual house builders.
- 1.3** The land which encompasses the area for which the plan change is proposed comprises an area of outwash material which declines from SH 6 towards the north and west; the valley floor; the northern portion of what is known as the Table Lands which comprises hummocky land extending from the southern side of Peninsula Hill; and the southern portion of the Peninsula Hill massif.
- 1.4** C90/2005 established that the southern portion of the Peninsula Hill massif, despite being within the Jacks Point Zone, was Outstanding Natural Landscape (Wakatipu Basin). I agree with this classification. The land form is obviously a part of Peninsula Hill and its glacial origins obvious. It is clad with a mix of indigenous and exotic grasses with significant areas of indigenous scrub which both highlight its topographical detail and give it a moderately high natural character. It is a part of a highly memorable natural landscape with high aesthetic appeal.
- 1.5** A Landscape Effects Assessment Report was included with the Plan Change application. This report focusses on the effects as experienced from outside the JPRZ-HD and does not examine any issues of internal amenity. The report utilises the Coneburn Area Resource Study which was undertaken in 2002 to support the creation of the Jacks Point Resort Zone (JPRZ) as a basis, particularly its visibility analysis which was done using computer based modelling. This visibility analysis, along with other data, was used to establish areas which could absorb development and areas of greater sensitivity. While I agree that this Study was extremely comprehensive and is a valuable resource it does have, in my opinion, a significant weakness. This is that visibility was only modelled from SH 6 and from the surface of the Lake. In fact views down the Coneburn Valley from Frankton and from within the Remarkables Park Zone and from Queenstown are undergoing significant transformation as a result of the development which has been consented within JPRZ, views which were not considered by the Coneburn study.
- 1.6** The area which is the subject of the proposed plan change has an approved ODP (RM0701131) which includes an indicative subdivision layout; a density plan; a visibility analyses (from SH 6 only) pre and post mitigation; lot setback requirements; a pedestrian network; design concepts for visitor parking, open space and road reserve treatments, a roading hierarchy; and a landscape

management plan for the entire area subject to the proposed plan change. It also includes design guidelines for residential developments and for comprehensive developments which contain site, building and landscape controls.

1.7 As the brief for this work requested specific responses to specific issues this report is structured accordingly.

2.0 ABSORPTION CAPACITY OF AMENDED ACTIVITY AREAS

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Under the existing ODP four residential neighbourhoods are anticipated, and one village neighbourhood. Under the proposed plan change the area available for residential development would be extended, both in regard to the existing development areas and the village neighbourhood, and the pod form of the neighbourhoods which has been carried over from Jacks Point is to be eliminated from the structure plan.

2.1.2 A comparison of the areas proposed is useful:

ODP Area	Area	Residences anticipated	Residential density (dwellings per ha)	Equivalent PPC Area	Area	Residences anticipate	Residential density (dwellings per ha)
1	15.05ha	179	11	F	30ha	540	18
2	8.19ha	88	10	D	18ha	325	18
3	17.32ha	208	12	E	25ha	450	18
4	6.24ha	68	8	C	17ha	255	15
Village	13.88ha	-	-	G	23ha	800	35

As can be seen from this table there is a significant increase in the density of proposed development, the number of residential units proposed and the area to be developed.

2.2 Urban development areas

2.2.1 **ODP Area 1, PPC Area F:** This area is largely located on the valley floor. The largest area of expansion proposed is to the west, extending onto a slightly elevated portion of the valley floor adjacent to the slopes up to the Table Lands. This area mainly falls within the areas determined in the Coneburn Study to have a high potential to absorb change (the valley floor) and medium potential to absorb change (the elevated areas to the west). The Espie report provides an indication of the visibility of this proposed extension of development in Appendix 12.1 (Area 5) and I concur with the approximate extent illustrated. My own assessment is that extending development in this direction would not have a significantly adverse effect on views from SH 6 or from within Jacks Point itself although in the latter case this is partly dependent on the design controls which are placed on both the built form and the open space areas of the site.

2.2.2 **ODP Area 2, PPC Area D:** This area is anticipated to expand to the north into an area which is central to the valley floor and bisected by Woolshed Road. This area was determined by the Coneburn Study to have high potential to absorb change. It is the case that Espie does not identify any locations from which development in this area would be visible. I consider, however, that once conifers on the site, which I understand are to be removed, are gone, that development in this area would extend the urban form visible from Frankton and the Remarkables Park Zone slightly. The limits on this increase in the visibility of built form from this direction are due to its low lying location.

2.2.3 **ODP Area 3, PPC Area E:** This area is proposed to expand the least, and most of the expansion proposed is into the open areas which surround the pod in the ODP layout. It is to be noted that there is a reasonably significant gully running along the eastern edge of this area which would lend itself to protection as open space, and is so identified under the current Structure Plan. This area has been located in an area determined by the Coneburn Study to have high potential to absorb change. It is the case, however, that development in this area would be readily visible in public and private views from Frankton and Remarkables Park. While the extent of development in this area is not proposed to alter significantly, it is the case that the density is proposed to alter significantly (an increase of approximately 50%) and this could diminish the quality of the views down the Coneburn Valley significantly as open space for tree planting would be diminished, and with more dense residential development larger trees are avoided because of shading.



Fig 1: Zoomed photograph from Riverside Road in Remarkables Park showing visibility of residential development within Henley Downs.

2.2.4 **ODP Area 4, PPC Area C:** It is in this area that the most significant increase in development area is proposed, as well as a significant increase in the density of development. The pod of development proposed under the consented ODP was to be arrayed more-or-less around a gully system which wraps around the southern end of this area with a node of development at the southern and northern ends of this feature. It is proposed to extend the development area to include an area of open land which slopes gently towards the north. While this remains within the area determined by the Coneburn Study to have a high potential to absorb change, it is an area readily visible from Frankton and Remarkables Park and I consider that development within it would have an adverse effect on the views from these areas.

2.2.5 **General:** It is of concern that not only is the intention to expand the areas of development but it is also intended to increase the density of development. The number of residential dwellings in these areas is intended to be increased by 190% while the area of land available to be built upon is to increase by 120%. This represents a significant increase in residential density which has attendant effects on the anticipated amenity of the proposed development and on its effects on the broader landscape. With more dense residential development fewer trees can be included due to space and shading issues, and trees which are planted tend to be smaller in order to deal with the same issues. In this instance this would have an adverse effect on the character of the landscape in the vicinity as it would introduce a much more suburban type development into a landscape in which has been strongly controlled to retain the dominance of natural features and natural character.

2.3 New proposed development areas

2.3.1 **Area A:** This area is located within a rough wedge of land between SH6 and Woolshed Road to the north of the majority of development areas. The area of the wedge is in the realm of 17ha. Area A as proposed in the plan change is 5.5ha. This area has two residential units located within it already and the proposal is to allow two more resulting in a density of 1 dwelling per 1.4ha (not 1 dwelling per 0.7ha as stated in the plan change request). This area is located so that its northern half (approximately) is located within an area determined in the Coneburn Study to have a medium to low

potential to absorb change and its southern half is located in an area determined to have high potential to absorb change. It is the case that the vicinity has many mature trees on it and that it has a somewhat hummocky terrain. I consider that it is likely that this area could absorb two further residences without adversely affecting the character of the landscape in the vicinity, but this is largely dependent on the maintenance of the existing, or equivalent, tree cover, and on the maintenance of the surrounding open space between Area A and the flanking roadways.

- 2.3.2 **Area B:** This is an area of flattish land to the south of Area A. It is adjacent to the most northern neighbourhood of Jacks Point to its south, and to Areas C and D to its south west. It is separated from these areas by a watercourse which forms a significant feature in this part of the site. It is proposed to be separated from SH6 by a buffer area in which mounding and planting is to be undertaken. It is located within the area determined in the Coneburn Study to have a high potential to absorb development. In my opinion it is largely screened from views from the north only by intervening vegetation and is potentially prominent in public and private views from Remarkables Park. Development is anticipated at a density of approximately 15.5 dwellings per hectare (average lot size of 450m²) and I consider that this is high and would likely result in adverse effects on the landscape owing to the inability to mitigate built form by significant planting within the lots.
- 2.3.3 **Area G:** This area replaces the village area of Henley Downs. It is proposed to allow for medium density residential development in this area, and as a consequence 800 residential units may be developed. Under the existing structure plan village type development was restricted, in the main, to the more northern part of this area with a horseshoe shaped indentation in the southern end of the area to encompass a small hillock which is a notable feature of the valley floor. This hillock is to be a part of the Open Space / Recreation zone and is to be managed as 'traditional parkland' with exotic amenity trees for active and passive recreation, according to the current Outline Development Plan. The village area within the Henley Downs portion of the site is not included in the current ODP, but Plan rules restrict the density of development to a maximum of 60% of the area of the zone, a minimum of a third of that built area to be residential and a sixth to be commercial (12.2.5.1(x)). It also sets a maximum building height of 10m (12.2.5.2(ii)(c)). I understand that this height limit is to be continued over into the new activity area but that it is anticipated that this area will be predominantly residential in nature. I consider that what is proposed is quite a radical departure from the development which is anticipated under the existing zoning. The loss of a significant area of guaranteed open space plus the proposed density of one unit per 201m² (at 10m in height) could, in my opinion, have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of the existing occupants of Jacks Point and on the broader development as a whole. What is anticipated by the current plan and existing ODPs is that elevated lots within Jacks Point would look down on and over a village development interspersed with significant open areas. Because of the commercial emphasis anticipated architecture is likely to be of variable forms and styles while in the Henley Downs part of the village an increasing emphasis on residential use would blend development into the residential areas to the north. In my opinion this area is very sensitive in terms of the internal amenity of Jacks Point and I consider that what is proposed would have a significant adverse effect on this internal amenity.
- 2.3.4 **Area H:** This is a small area located within the base of the Table Lands massif, and arguably located within the area determined by the Environment Court to be Outstanding Natural Landscape. It is proposed to allow one dwelling to be constructed in this area. It is located within an area determined by the Coneburn Study to have a medium potential to absorb development. I have no particular concerns about the part of the proposal provided that development in this location is undertaken in accordance with the objectives and policies of the Outstanding Natural Landscape (Wakatipu Basin). In particular it should be in accordance with Objective 4.1.4 (1) and Objective 4.2.5. In practical terms this means that a building platform should ensure that a dwelling on it would be reasonably difficult to see; design controls should contribute to this and ensure that a dwelling is recessive in this location; and landscaping should be undertaken which enhances the ecological well-being of the site. This could be achieved by applying the current rules which apply to the home sites within the Table Lands to this development area.
- 2.3.5 **Area I:** This is a narrow area occupying a similar but larger fold in the base of the Table Lands massif as Area H, encompassing an area of 3ha. In the notified version of the plan change it is proposed to allow a total of 7 dwellings to be constructed in Area I representing one dwelling per 0.4ha approximately. This is a similar density to rural residential zoning. It is located, approximately, within an area determined by the Coneburn Study to have medium potential to absorb development. In my opinion development within this area as proposed would not have any significant adverse effects on either from SH 6, or other public views, nor on the internal amenity of residents within Jacks Point. The RCL submission on the plan change seeks to increase the density of residential

development in this area to 8. I do not consider that the addition of one further residential unit in this area would have a significant effect.

- 2.3.6 **Area J:** This is an area of 9ha extending up the lower slopes of the Table Lands to the north west of the Jacks Point Village activity area and to the west of the significant wetland which forms the western edge of area G. It is proposed to allow for 100 homes in this activity area or one dwelling per 900m². Once roading and open space are allowed for it is estimated that lot sizes would be approximately 630m² which roughly approximates low density residential development in the rest of the District. In my opinion this location is sensitive because it is elevated and because it is immediately adjacent to the significant wetland. It is approximately located within the area described by the Coneburn Study to have a medium potential to absorb change, but it is noted that this assessment is based, in this area, on the extent of visibility from SH6 only. In my opinion development at this density in this area would have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of residents within Jacks Point. This would result from the extension of essentially suburban development up the slope of the western side of the valley. It would also reduce the amenity of the wetland and its surrounds (and possibly its water quality) which is identified in the Jacks Point ODP as an area of public domain with recreational trails along its western margin. In the existing Henley Downs ODP this Area J is entirely located within areas intended for Open Space / Recreation and Open Space / Golf.
- 2.3.7 **Area K:** This area is, in the main, more elevated still than Area J and located to its west. It includes a gully area to the north so is not quite as exposed to views from across the valley as might be expected. Most of Area K is located within the part of the landscape deemed by the Coneburn Study to have a medium potential to absorb change, with the more westerly portion deemed to have high to medium potential. It is proposed to allow for 4 dwellings only in this Area which encompasses 4ha. Consequently it is the density anticipated in a rural lifestyle setting, and the potential exists to ensure that development within this Area is located so as to have the least possible effect on the internal amenity of Jacks Point, as well as minimally visible from SH6. It is possible that area J could absorb development at a similar density without significant adverse effects on the amenity of Jacks Point. The RCL submission on the plan change requests that the number of residences which may be included in this area (admittedly reconfigured to increase the area above that notified) to 10. In my opinion this is too great a potential increase in built form for this area to absorb.
- 2.3.8 **Area L:** In their submission on the plan change RCL have proposed a further development area, Area L. This area is located on the top of the Table Lands at their most northern extent, and would be accessed by the road which leads to the most northerly of the Table Lands Home Sites. It is unclear the actual land area that Area L encompasses, but it is located in a shallow gully which runs across the top of the Table Lands from east to west. Home Site 36 is located to the west of and below this gully, and Home Sites 34 and 35 are located just over a small ridge to the south. It is proposed to allow for three residential units in this development area. This area is located within the area deemed by the Coneburn Study to have a medium – low potential to absorb change. In my opinion the presence of development within this area is unlikely, provided it is undertaken sensitively, to be prominent within Jacks Point. I do, however, consider that the inclusion of three dwellings in this location could have an adverse effect on the neighbouring home sites. While dwellings in this location would not be visible from any dwelling on home sites 34, 35, or 36, the presence of three dwellings could affect their amenity adversely, in terms of noise and vehicle movements, and dwellings in this area would be visually prominent within this area from the access road and from within the home site properties. In my opinion the Area could absorb one dwelling undertaken in the same manner and with the same controls and expectations as the home sites.

3.0 AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND RECREATION ACTIVITY AREA

- 3.1 The plan change proposes to replace the open space areas which are provided for in the Jacks Point zone with the ACRAA. The Jacks Point Open Space area is split into a number of sub areas. These are golf course and open space; golf course, open space and recreational facilities; Lakeshore landscape protection area; highway landscape protection area; Peninsula Hill landscape protection area and, within the Henley Downs portion of the site, open space and passive recreation. Of relevance to this plan change are all but the Lake shore landscape protection area which has been excluded from the proposal.
- 3.2 12.2.5.1 of the District Plan includes the following rules regarding the use of these areas:

- (d) *Golf Course and Open Space (G) - the use of this area is restricted to outdoor recreation activities and open space provided that up to two residential units may be established on Lot 6 DP 22166.*
- (e) *Open Space, Landscaping and Passive Recreation (O/P) - the use of this area is restricted to outdoor recreation activities and open space.*
- (h) *Home site Activity Area (HS Activity Area) - the use of this area is restricted to Residential Activities and, in addition, a maximum of one residential unit per HS Activity Area.*
- (j) *Open Space - Foreshore (OSF) - the use of this area is restricted to the regeneration of native endemic species over 80% of the land area, and retention of open space.*
- (k) *Open Space (OS) - the use of this area is restricted to pastoral and arable farming and endemic revegetation.*

In addition to these site standards rule 12.2.3.2(ix) determines that landscaping within the Highway Protection Area is to be a controlled activity and 12.2.3.4(xii) extends further controls over the planting of vegetation within the zone as follows:

- (a) *Within the Highway Landscape Protection Area (refer Structure Plan) - the planting and/or growing of any tree which may or does obscure views from the State Highway to the mountain peaks beyond the zone.*
- (b) *Within the Peninsula Hill Landscape Protection Area (refer Structure Plan) - the planting and/or cultivation of any tree or shrub which is not indigenous and characteristic of the Peninsula Hill escarpment.*
- (c) *Within the Lakeshore Landscape Protection Area (refer Structure Plan) the planting and/or cultivation of any tree or shrub which is not indigenous and characteristic of the Lake Wakatipu foreshore.*
- (d) *Within the Tablelands (refer Structure Plan), the planting and/or cultivation of any exotic vegetation, with the exception of:*
 - (i) *grass species if local and characteristic of the area; and*
 - (ii) *other vegetation if it is:*
 - *less than 0.5 metres in height; and*
 - *less than 20 square metres in area; and*
 - *within 10 metres of a building; and*
 - *intended for domestic consumption.*

Together these controls combine provide a strong direction to the character and management of the open space areas within the zone.

3.3 The proposed plan change includes only one open space area and it includes an objective and five policies to direct the use and management of it in its entirety. This is as follows with my commentary interspersed:

Objective 3: The Agriculture, Conservation and Recreation Activity Area

The Agriculture, Conservation and Recreation Activity Area supports and contains the Henley Downs urban area, maintaining and enhancing the landscape, recreational and natural values that surround it.

While it is not clear to me what is meant by 'supports' in relation to the Henley Downs urban area, I consider that this objective is positive and would appear to continue the emphasis which exists within the current Jacks Point zone on the importance of maintaining the quality of the landscape context of the zone.

Policies:

- 3.1 *Use of the Agriculture, Conservation and Recreation Area is enabled where there is minimal adverse effects (sic) on landscape, recreational and natural values.*

In my opinion the wording of the policy is odd as 'use' appears to mean something other than maintaining and enhancing the landscape, recreational and natural values.

- 3.2 *Infrastructure and associated servicing in the Agriculture, Conservation and Recreation Activity Area that is necessary to support Greater Jacks Point is enabled.*

I find it extremely difficult to imagine how enabling the construction of infrastructure and associated servicing contributes to accomplishing the objective of 'maintaining and enhancing the landscape, recreational and natural values' of the ACRAA. While it is clear that infrastructure and related services are likely critical to the ongoing development of the wider zone it is my opinion that a specific area should be identified within the structure plan for these services and that it should entail its own objectives, policies and rules. I will return to this point later.

- 3.3 *The biodiversity values of the Agriculture, Conservation and Recreation Activity Area are protected and enhanced.*

This seems entirely appropriate and necessary to achieving the stated objective.

- 3.4 *Valuable natural vegetation and habitat in the Agriculture, Conservation and Recreation Activity Area, including grey shrublands, wetlands, and the ecological links between them and the lakeshore escarpment is protected and encouraged to re-establish.*

While I have a small concern about the inclusion of the word 'valuable' as it invites argument about how this should be determined, this policy is in keeping with the stated objective, and would assist in its achievement.

- 3.5 *Buildings in the Agriculture, Conservation and Recreation Activity Area are limited to those that:*

- (i) support agriculture, conservation or recreation; and/or*
- (ii) provide infrastructure or servicing for Greater Jacks Point; and/or*
- (iii) do not undermine the values set out in policies 3.1 to 3.4 above.*

As noted above, it is hard to understand how infrastructure and services contribute to the stated objective for the zone.

Under the current Jacks Point zone the construction of buildings within the open space areas is a non-complying activity. It is proposed that this should become a discretionary activity under rule 12.30.2.3(vi). Further, it is proposed that subdivision of the ACRAA be a controlled activity under as there is no requirement for an ODP for this area. (I do note that subdivision of land in the open space areas is a controlled activity currently under the Jacks Point zone.)

- 3.4 The proposed rules for the ACRAA are much more liberal than those of the open space areas currently. The planting of wilding species is proposed to be a prohibited activity anywhere in the zone. This is positive. In the site standards of the notified version of the plan change it is proposed that indigenous vegetation in the identified areas of biodiversity value within the ACRAA should be protected by limiting the area which can be cleared, prohibiting the planting of exotic trees and shrubs and requiring any buildings to be proposed within the ODP process. RCL's submission requests the removal of the identified areas of biodiversity value and extends the controls over vegetation clearance over the entire ACRAA. In my opinion this is positive. Their submission also requests the elimination of the ban on the planting of exotic trees and shrubs. In my opinion this allows for a very significant departure from the landscape character which underlies the existing zoning, and the landscape classification of much of the site, and I do not consider this to be positive.

- 3.5 Areas of development proposed under the Henley Downs Structure Plan transgress into areas which are to be retained as open space under the Jacks Point structure plan as follows:

Areas A, B and part of D	Within the open space highway protection area.
Part of Area F	Within the open space area
Part of Area J	Within the open space area
Area H, I, K and part of J	Within the Tablelands open space area

I have discussed the ability of these areas to absorb development above. It has been suggested that the most sensitive areas, H, I, J, K and L, should, however, be subsumed within the ACRAA. It is my opinion, that, given the effective watering down of the landscape controls which currently apply to the open space areas of the Jacks Point zone this would be a mistake. Retaining the activity areas as proposed would enable Council to exert control over development in these areas at the ODP approval stage while providing the landowners with a higher level of certainty than the discretionary activity which would apply if they were included in the ACRAA. Further, while such activities are discretionary within the Rural General zone they are adequately supported in that zone by objectives and policies which, based on the landscape classification of the site, restrict development potential to a much higher degree than the proposed objectives and policies for the ACRAA.

4.0 EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE ACTIVITY AREAS WITHIN JACKS POINT

4.1 The existing Jack Point zone and development within it are notable for the sensitivity with which it deals with its surrounding environment, and the high level of amenity which has been created within the zone by building upon the existing landscape elements.

4.2 It has been proposed by a submitter that the land subject to the plan change remain as a part of the Jacks Point Zone but with some amendments made to that part of the Plan which would apply to only the Henley Downs portion of the zone. I consider that this proposal has significant merit. In my opinion there are two really important landscape issues which need to be resolved in terms of this plan change. These are that the level of sensitivity to the surrounding environment which has been established within the Jacks Point zone should be maintained and that the character and level of amenity of the existing development should extend through the Henley Downs portion of the zone.

4.3 The controls which currently exist over, not only the open space zones, but also the home sites within the Table Lands, ensure that the landscape context of the more intense township development is protected and remains highly natural. It is my opinion, stated above, that proposed Area L could be developed as a further home site but that the same controls should apply to it as apply to the existing home sites including the requirement for revegetation planting and the limitations on the planting of exotic vegetation. The intrusion of the other proposed development areas into the open space area could be best managed by the extending of the types of controls over development which exist within the Jacks Point zone. Further, the continuation of the character of Jacks Point into the more intense development areas would best be achieved by the imposition of similar design controls over buildings, planting, and the design of public open space. I appreciate that what is intended for Henley Downs is a cheaper product than Jacks Point, but I consider that it is entirely possible to produce this without risking the creation of a non-descript low density residential suburb.

5.0 OPEN SPACE WITHIN THE URBAN ACTIVITY AREAS

5.1 The proposed structure plan submitted with the proposed plan change eliminates all of the open space within the urban development area that is provided for within the existing structure plan. The identification of open space is a requirement of the ODP process in association with public transport links, pedestrian and cycle links. In my opinion there are two weaknesses to this approach.

5.2 I understand that part of the reassessment of the development potential of the Henley Downs area has been based on issues which have arisen within Jacks Point resulting from the pod style of subdivision which has been undertaken there. The ODP for Henley Downs is based on a similar concept and it is proposed to eliminate this. Having got myself lost at Jacks Point on a number of occasions I have considerable sympathy for the argument that the pod layout is not good design and that a more permeable urban form is desirable. There are a number of physical features, however, within the Henley Downs area which I do consider should be a part of an open space network and which under the proposed structure plan could be developed.

5.2.1 The first of these features is a significant gully which is located approximately along the boundary between areas D and E with Area C. This is open space within the existing structure plan and ODP and I consider that it should be maintained as open space. There are two reasons for this. The first is simply that I consider that as much of the natural landform of the area as possible should be maintained so that the development responds to its environment, rather than reforming its environment to its needs. In this manner the character of the environment is also maintained. The second reason is that it provides a potential connection with the adjacent Jacks Point neighbourhoods which are separated from Henley Downs in this vicinity by gullies. These gullies

have been used as open space within Jacks Point to great effect as the location of walkways and it is my opinion that they should be utilised as a means of connecting the two development areas. In addition to walkways extending through them connecting the two communities, the treatment of the two areas should be continuous utilising the same construction methods and planting palettes. In the Jacks Point zone this has been largely a mix of mown and unmown grass with the pre-existing matagouri and coprosma scrub maintained. In the forested gully this palette would have to be recreated but once the conifers went this should not be too difficult a challenge.

5.2.2 The second significant feature is a water course which forms the boundary between proposed areas D and C and areas B and A. This is a fairly significant creek, currently bounded by willows and which lends itself to becoming an amenity feature for both residential development and recreational use. This is currently located on the margins of the open space activity area and the open space highway landscape protection area. I consider that it and its margins to approximately 30m either side of the centre of the creek should be identified within the structure plan for protection and management as open space. This should not preclude the placement of access points across the creek for roading to connect area B with the balance of the development area.

5.2.3 The third significant feature within the proposed zone, and one which has been recognised within the proposed structure plan, is the large wetland which is located in the south west of the proposed zone. The ecological assessment included in the plan change proposal identifies this wetland as one of the areas of greatest biodiversity value within the plan change area. A biodiversity management and restoration plan for this area is required as a part of the ODP process for the zone, and I consider that this is positive. I note that the boundary of the wetland area has been drawn very close to, if not on, its actual margins, which is arguably appropriate for identifying the area on which the management plan needs to focus. I consider, however, that this wetland is such a significant feature that it has the potential to be a focus for the design of the wider development as well as a focus for recreation and amenity within the zone. Consequently I consider that it should be surrounded by a significant area of open space in order to ensure that development is not allowed to extend too close to it and to enable its development as a significant park area. An area somewhat similar to that currently provided for by the existing structure plan would be appropriate. I note that there is an existing design concept for the wetland area approved as a part of the current ODP. This restricts parkland to the eastern side of the wetland. I note, however, that under this ODP, and the existing structure plan, no residential development is anticipated to the west of the wetland, whereas residential development is anticipated under this proposed plan change. I consider that any development to the west of the wetland should be kept well away so that it does not impinge on its margins.

5.2.4 The fourth significant feature within the proposed zone is the hillock located on the valley floor adjacent to the boundary of the Jacks Point Village zone. Under the existing structure plan this to be open space and under the approved ODP this area is described as 'public domain' which I understand to mean parkland type open space. Under the proposed plan change this area becomes part of area G which is to be medium density residential development. I consider it extremely unlikely that it would be feasible to undertake such development on this hillock without flattening it. I do note that there is a requirement proposed that the southern face of the knoll and its summit is to remain visible to the Jacks Point Village area but I consider that this is problematic and unlikely to have a positive result. I discuss this further below. While the alternative is that it may be retained as open space there is nothing in the proposal to ensure this outcome. Consequently I consider that it should be excluded from area G in the same manner as it is currently.

5.3 In conclusion, I consider that the open space network within the Henley Downs area should be included within the structure plan and that the significant landscape features within the urban area should be contained within that open space network.

6.0 MANAGEMENT OF THE ACRAA

6.1 QLDC raises the option of introducing three sub activity areas into the ACRAA to reflect their different characters, issues and roles within the zone. Under the existing structure plan the open space within the Henley Downs area is covered by a total of seven different sub activity areas. These are the O/S Highway Protection Area; the O/S Peninsula Hill Landscape Protection Area; the O/S Lakeshore Landscape Protection Area; the O/P Open Space and Passive Recreation Area; the Golf Course Area; the O/S Open Space Area; and the Tablelands overlay. Under the proposed plan change it is intended to eliminate all of these sub areas and have one only. (I do note that the plan change area does not include the O/S Lakeshore Landscape Protection Area nor a significant part of

the Tablelands where the existing home sites are located.) I have discussed some of the general issues arising from the ACRAA above. I will now examine the issues which it raises in some detail.

6.2 Peninsula Hill landscape protection area.

6.2.1 Firstly, the area of land which is currently covered by the O/S Peninsula Hill activity area more or less coincides with the area of the site which the Environment Court determined to be Outstanding Natural Landscape (Wakatipu Basin) in its C90 /2005 decision. Under the existing ODP this area is to be managed as follows:

- All open space areas are to be managed for the restoration of unimproved grassland, grey shrubland and tussock land and maintain the open rural character and the views to distant mountains;
- Pastoral management / grazing of certain areas will be required from time to time as a landscape management tool;
- Post and wire fencing shall be used as a landscape management tool for stock control only;
- Limited Public Access.

In addition landscaping and public access within this area is a controlled activity under 12.2.3.2(ix) where council's control is retained in regard to:

- All landscaping;
- Species proposed;
- Long term management considerations;
- The maintenance of view shafts;
- Integration with adjoining land uses;
- Mode of access ie walking, cycle or motor vehicle; and
- Alterations to the alignment of the public access route shown on the structure plan.

The 'planting and/or cultivation of any tree or shrub which is not indigenous and characteristic of the Peninsula Hill escarpment is a discretionary activity in the terms of 12.2.3.4(v) of the District Plan. In combination the controls ensure the management of this area which is appropriate for an outstanding natural landscape, and for the character of the current zone. It is to be noted that this area was determined by the Coneburn Study to have, in the main, a low to medium low potential to absorb development which re-emphasises its sensitivity.

6.2.2 As noted above (Para 3.4) the controls proposed for this area on Peninsula Hill are to be the same as that applied to all of the ACRAA and are to be more liberal than the current requirements of the Plan and of the ODP. In my opinion this represents a threat to the maintenance of the quality of the area of the site which has been determined to be an ONL. Consequently it is my opinion that if the ACRAA is to stand then there should be an overlay, or sub area, which covers this part of the site and ensures a level of control over activities in that area which are commensurate with those currently in place.

6.3 Highway Landscape Protection Area

6.3.1 The area of land covered by the current O/S Highway Landscape Protection Area in the main covers the valley floor to the north and north east of the Henley Downs Area. As noted above, areas A and B are located within this area as it is currently determined but a narrow strip has been maintained between those areas and the edge of the State Highway. The same controlled activity status for landscaping under 12.2.3.2(ix) exists for this area as for the O/S Peninsula Hill area. In addition the planting and/or growing of any tree which might obscure views from the State Highway to the mountain peaks beyond the zone is a discretionary activity (12.2.3.4(v)). The existing ODP requires the area to be managed in the following manner:

- predominantly grazed to maintain open rural character and views to distant mountains;
- public access limited to access road; and
- planting to be used predominantly for stock shelter except around existing dwellings.

6.3.2 In my opinion this area of the valley floor to the north of Henley Downs within the proposed structure plan actually fulfils two purposes. The area of land to the east of Areas A and B would provide a buffer between development, particularly in Area B, and the State Highway. I understand that it is anticipated that extensive earthworks will be undertaken in this area to create naturalistic mounding to reduce views into the zone from the State Highway, and that planting similar to that along the northern road margins of Jacks Point is to be repeated there. In my opinion the proposed plan change should reflect this. Further, the construction of buildings in this area would directly contradict the intention of this screening effect. Consequently I consider that this area should have its own overlay which facilitates earthworks, controls landscaping and precludes subdivision and the construction of buildings.

- 6.4** The valley floor land to the north of the site and to the north west of Woolshed Road has an expansive, open and pastoral character. This land within the Jacks Point zone serves to integrate the development with the Rural General zoned land to its north which has the same character. I consider that it is important to maintain this character, particularly if more dense development within Henley Downs is to be facilitated as this land provides it with a strongly rural context. It also forms the mid ground in views down the Coneburn Valley from Remarkables Park and parts of Frankton.
- 6.5** I have discussed the management of the urban open space above. It is the case, however, that in keeping with the existing Jacks Point zone this area could form a fourth type of open space.
- 7.0 DEVELOPMENT IN SENSITIVE AREAS**
- 7.1** The plan change as proposed requires the identification of building platforms in areas A, H, I, and K as a part of the ODP of the zone. It is then intended that the construction of dwellings on those platforms would be a permitted activity providing they complied with site and zone standards. A set of assessment matters are provided at 12.30.5.1(i) on page X-14 and these focus largely on issues of visibility from the State Highway.
- 7.2** The first assessment matter requires that building platforms in these areas be 'located such that resultant buildings and associated earthworks and landscaping' avoids breaking the line and form of the landscape with special regard to be had of ridges, skylines, hills and prominent slopes. This is probably an adequate starting point. As indicative subdivision designs are required in the ODP also it is possible to assess them jointly, as is desirable in my opinion.
- 7.3** Building platforms in Area A are to be located so as to ensure that buildings would not be highly visible from the State Highway and not visible from the existing dwellings within the area. I consider that this is appropriate, however, I have a concern that there are no controls to be exercised over landscaping in this area, which could result in over-domestication through inappropriate planting.
- 7.4** The assessment matter relating building platforms in area I requires that views of the area from SH6 be dominated by green space and vegetation and that parts of buildings should be a minor part of that view. Given a density of approximately one dwelling per 4000m², equivalent to rural residential density, I consider this would be difficult to achieve. This is particularly the case as no controls over landscaping are to be imposed.
- 7.5** One building platform is proposed for area H and this is to not be visible from SH 6. This mirrors the requirements for the ONL (WB) and I consider this to be appropriate. Again, however, the lack of control over landscaping in particular, and building design to a lesser extent, raises concerns regarding the planting of inappropriate species that would be domesticating and would not contribute to the ecological health of the vicinity.
- 7.6** In the notified version of the proposed plan change four building platforms are to be located within area K and the proposed assessment matters focus on whether or not the platforms and proposed mitigation would be effective 'in reducing the visibility' of development when viewed from the home sites and places frequented by the public outside of the zone. As there is no requirement to provide or describe any mitigation, nor are any landscaping controls proposed, within the ODP process it is hard to determine how that aspect of the assessment is to be undertaken. The RCL submission requests that the number of platforms in this area (albeit an enlarged area) be increased to 10. I consider that this is too many for this location, particularly in combination with the 100 dwellings proposed for the neighbouring area J.
- 7.7** In conclusion, it is my opinion that design controls over both built form and landscaping be required for areas I, H, and K. These should promote recessive building finishes and should also promote landscaping which will enhance the natural character and indigenous biodiversity of the sites and surrounding areas. I do have a lingering concern over the approval of building platforms with only indicative subdivision designs. This is simply that the nature of an indicative design is likely to be less definitive than that of a final design and I can foresee problems arising with building platforms needing to be moved in order to fit into final subdivision designs. I consider that dwelling design controls should apply to dwellings in Area A as well, but that landscaping controls in this area could be more akin to those which would be usual within the VAL landscapes of the Rural General zone.

8.0 CO-ORDINATION OF HENLEY DOWNS WITH JACKS POINT

8.1 There are a number of issues which I consider exist in relation to the co-ordination of the Jacks Point and Henley Downs areas. These in the main relate to character and the management of the landscape context.

8.1.1 The existing Jacks Point zone as it has been developed thus far has a strong character which has been determined by regulation at a number of levels. Building design controls are required. Landscaping within the more sensitive areas, the Lakeshore, Peninsula Hill and Highway landscape protection areas, is a controlled activity with regard to species, long term management considerations, maintenance of view shafts, integration with adjoining land uses and public access. In addition The ODP is required to provide guidelines for landscaping in all areas accessible to the public. There are further discretionary controls over planting (12.2.3.4(v)) which support the indigenous vegetation and subsequent character of the vicinity. There are requirements for revegetation to be undertaken in relation to each of the home sites on the Table lands and restrictions on the types of fencing which may be undertaken. These controls have worked to create the character and the quality of the development. The existing ODP for the Henley Downs area would ensure that a development of similar character to that of Jacks Point would occur. Most importantly, however, is the objective of the zone and the raft of policies within section 12.1.2 of the Plan which repeatedly refer to the importance of the landscape, both internally and from outside the zone, and to the importance of managing the zone so as to enhance biodiversity.

8.1.2 The proposed plan change would eliminate the requirement for most of these design requirements, and would significantly diminish the importance of the landscape within the objectives and policies for the new zone. It is the case that the proposal includes some design controls as site standards. These include restrictions on the external materials and colours of dwellings and specific controls relating to setbacks and outdoor living areas for residential units. I do not consider that these would be adequate to ensure adequate protection of the landscape and biodiversity of the area or to ensure a co-ordinated character between the two zones.

9.0 NATURAL LANDFORMS WITHIN THE URBAN ACTIVITY AREAS

9.1 I have discussed the features of the site which I consider it is important to retain above, and consider that all of these should be identified as open space within any structure plan which is included within the plan change.

9.2 The proposed rules regarding the OPD require that 'a significant part of the south face of the mound toward the south end of Development Area G is to be retained, including its existing height so that an undeveloped slope can be viewed from the Jacks Point Village'. I am unclear as to the exact height of this mound, but understand it is in the realm of 20m. As the height limit of buildings in this area is to be 10m and development to this height is to be allowed to the south of the mound it is unlikely that any but the very top of the mound would be visible to someone on the ground and the boundary of the zone. Further, it may be clad with 10m high buildings to the north. I reiterate my opinion that this hillock should be retained as open space as per the existing Henley Downs Structure Plan.

10.0 MITIGATION OF VISIBILITY FROM THE STATE HIGHWAY

10.1 It is proposed that mounding and planting be undertaken along the margin of SH 6 to the east of Area B and that this mounding and planting would wrap around that area towards the north west. This would be necessary to achieve the goal of ensuring that buildings are not highly visible from the state highway as it is expressed in the proposed assessment matters. It is anticipated that this work will be similar in execution to that which has been undertaken within Jacks Point.

10.2 The proposed requirements for the ODP allow for conditions to preclude development until landscaping has been undertaken, existing vegetative screening secured and / or a succession plan for existing vegetation put into place. A query has been raised as to whether or not performance standards should also be included to ensure that an adequate level of screening is secured prior to any development taking place.

10.3 I concur with the Espie report that urban development in the extended area C plus area B would require mounding and planting to ensure that it was not 'highly visible' from SH 6. As urban development in this area is likely to be the most visible within the zone in views from outside, both SH 6 and from further afield, I consider the inclusion of a requirement for performance standards to

be included within the ODP as appropriate. It is also the case, as I noted above, that the development potential within Area A is primarily the result of a combination of hummocky topography and, more importantly, the existing trees within the area. I consider that performance standards to ensure that any further planting or replacement trees were sufficiently well established to provide adequate screening should also be a requirement of the ODP for Area A.

11.0 PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY

11.1 The protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the plan change area is critical to the maintenance of its landscape character and to its integration with Jacks Point. Currently the area is subject to policies 3.8 and 3.9 (12.1.4 Objective 3) which explicitly require the protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the zone. In addition the current ODP requires that the Table Lands, the wetland and the Peninsula Hill landscape area all be managed for the enhancement of their indigenous ecosystems.

11.2 The proposed plan change includes policies regarding the enhancement of existing watercourses to provide biodiversity corridors and to protect and enhance biodiversity within the ACRAA. (Policies 2.19, 3.3 & 3.4). Policy 2.19 relates to the Urban Activity Area Objective and so would apply to the wetland which, under the notified version of the plan change is within Area J. Policies 3.3 and 3.4 relate to the ACRAA only.

11.3 I consider that the requirement for the ODP to include a biodiversity management and restoration plan for the wetland is positive from a landscape perspective and I leave assessment of the adequacy of the actual requirements to an ecologist.

11.4 The plan change as notified includes areas of biodiversity value identified in the structure plan (including the wetland) which extend over much of the Table Lands and within the ONL area (currently the Peninsula Hill Landscape Protection Area). RCL have, however, in their submission, requested that these areas be removed from the structure plan, and proposed that, effectively, the only protection to remain for indigenous vegetation in the ACRAA be a restriction on the area which may be cleared. It is my opinion that identifying the areas of biodiversity value in the manner in which they are identified in the notified version of the proposed plan change is problematic. This is because it invites inappropriate responses like fencing, which may not be desirable in the broader context; encourages the perception that the areas outside of the areas of value are not of value; and potentially limits the regeneration of indigenous vegetation over the broader landscape by encouraging the exploitation (heavier grazing for example) of the excluded areas. That having been said, I do not consider the rules as they propose them to be at all adequate, and consider that they represent a marked departure from the current situation under the Jacks Point zone. The rules are not, in my opinion, adequate to promote the stated objective and policies.

11.5 It is also of concern that the proposed removal of the wetland from Area J under the RCL submission would mean that it would be removed from the ambit of Policy 2.19. While the biodiversity management and restoration plan may be adequate to protect and enhance the qualities of the wetland it would seem more consistent to have all of the water courses within the zone covered by the same objectives and policies.

12.0 SUBDIVISION OF LAND IN THE ACRAA

12.1 It is my understanding of the proposed plan change that subdivision within the ACRAA would be a discretionary activity under proposed rule 15.2.3.3(xiv). Currently it is the case that subdivision of this area would be a controlled activity under rule 15.2.3.2 of the District Plan. Increasing the status of subdivision within the ACRAA to discretionary would be positive, and would mean that it would be treated in a similar manner to land in the Rural General zone.

13.0 DESIGN CONTROLS

13.1 Currently the design of built form and of landscaping is managed by design guidelines which have been approved as a part of the ODP process. Buildings which comply with the guidelines require a controlled activity resource consent, and those which do not require restricted discretionary consent. The plan change proposes that buildings which comply with the design guidelines included in the plan change, which are restricted to height limits, controls over exterior materials and to the LRV of roof and wall colours, would be a permitted activity. No controls over landscaping are proposed.

13.2 While I consider that the intention to make the construction of dwellings which comply with design guidelines a permitted rather than a controlled activity is positive, I do not consider that the design guidelines which are proposed are adequate. This is particularly the case in regard to the co-ordination of development in the Henley Downs area with that in Jacks Point. I understand that it is the intention of the plan change to ensure that a cheaper product is available in Henley Downs, but I do not consider that removing the design controls would be necessary to achieving this, save for allowing for some cheaper materials such as Colorsteel. Certainly, removing landscaping controls would have no overall effect on the affordability of property in the zone, but would diminish the coherence of the character which has been developed at Jacks Point and which is a point of difference and one which complements the natural landscape of the vicinity.

14.0 CONCLUSION

14.1 A plan change is proposed which would enable more dense residential development over a wider area within the Henley Downs portion of the Jacks Point zone.

14.2 The alterations which it is proposed to make to the areas in which development may occur include the expansion of existing development areas and the creation of some new ones.

14.2.1 The expanded development areas, C, D, E, and F in the proposed structure plan, would remain within areas which are fairly well able to absorb the development in the terms of views from State Highway 6. It is the case that the expansion of areas C, D, and E would increase the level of residential development visible in views down the Coneburn Valley from within the Remarkables Park zone with some degradation of these views. The density of development proposed within these areas is of concern as it would result in reduced levels of landscaping and a subsequent lack of softening of built form and an increased suburban character. The lack of design controls to ensure consistency with Jacks Point over building appearance and landscaping are problematic and in combination with the increased density have the potential to adversely affect the amenity of Jacks Point.

14.2.2 The new development areas A, H, and I are able to absorb development as proposed within the plan change. The lack of design controls to ensure consistency of landscaping and building appearance is problematic in areas H and I.

14.2.3 Development area B is potentially prominent in views from the north and is of such density that, in combination with the lack of design controls, it has the potential to adversely affect the amenity of residents in the northern parts of Jacks Point.

14.2.4 Development area G replaces the Henley Downs village with medium density residential development up to a height of 10m and extends the area of development to the south. Development following the proposed plan change would have an adverse effect on the views within Jacks Point and would result in a significant reduction in the amenity of Jacks Point residents and on the development as a whole.

14.2.5 Development areas H and I can absorb the level of development proposed but the lack of control over the external appearance of dwellings and more particularly in these locations, over the management of the landscape, is problematic.

14.2.6 Development area J would, if developed at the proposed density and with the proposed relative lack of control over external appearance and landscaping, have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of residents within Jacks Point. The area could absorb some development at an equivalent density of the Rural Lifestyle zone provided suitable controls over the exterior appearance of dwellings and the management of the landscape were imposed.

14.2.7 Development area K would, if developed at the density proposed by RCL in their submission and with the proposed relative lack of control over external appearance and landscaping, have an adverse effect on the amenity of residents within Jacks Point. Development at the density of approximately one dwelling per hectare over the combined areas of J and K could be absorbed without this adverse effect providing the exterior appearance of the buildings was appropriately controlled along with appropriate landscape management controls.

14.2.8 Development area L, included in RCL's submission, could absorb one dwelling with the same site and design controls as the existing Table Lands home sites without causing significant adverse

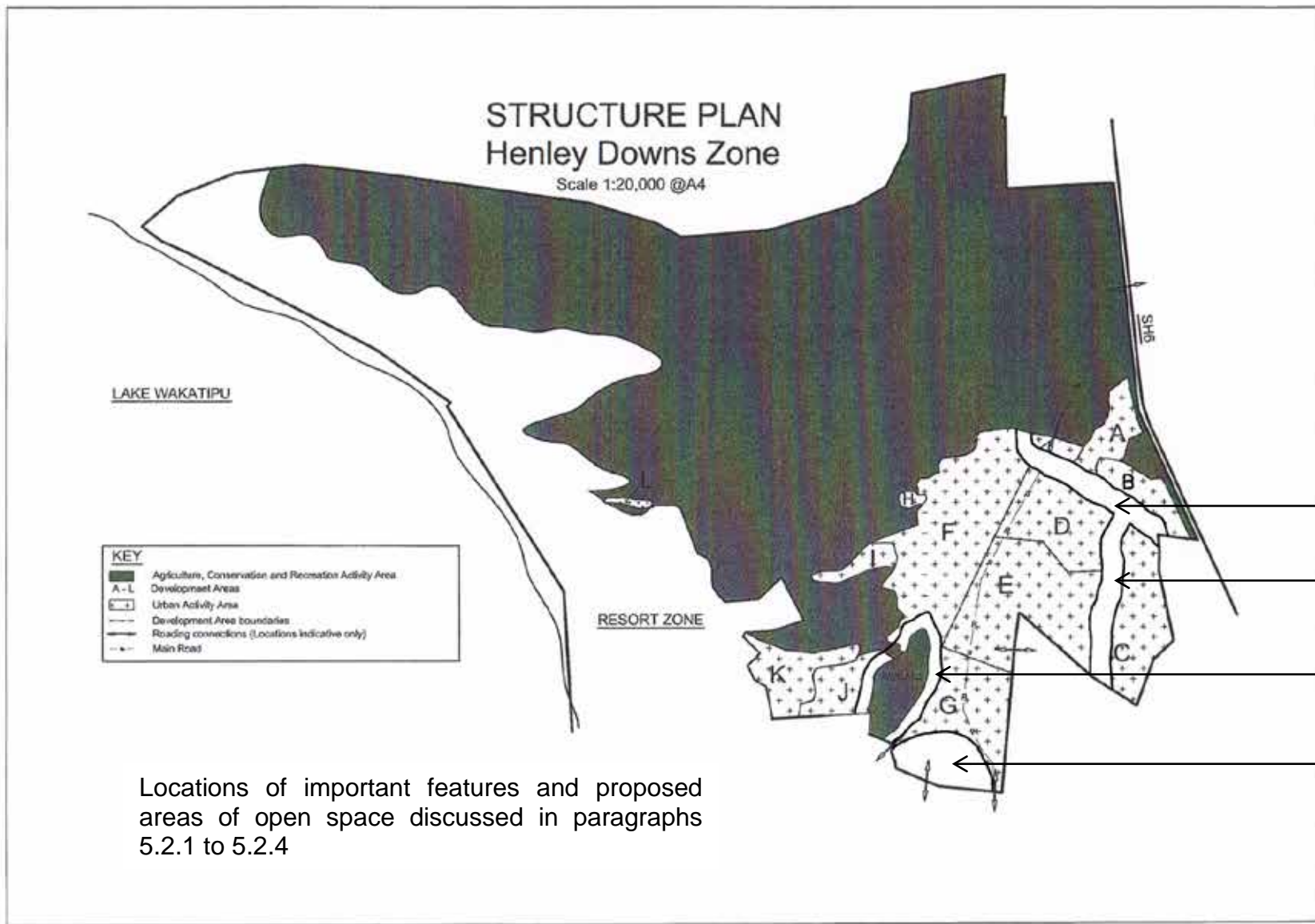
effects. Development within this area as proposed would have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of the adjacent home sites 34, 35, and 36.

- 14.3** Some of the expansion of the development areas in the urban portion of the site has been undertaken at the expense of open space areas which are identified in the existing structure plan. This is of concern as there are several significant features within the area which are currently protected by the open space areas of the Structure Plan, in particular the small hillock on the valley floor; a gully within a pine plantation approximately on the boundary between areas C and E; and a creek approximately on the boundary between areas C and B. These areas should be maintained as open space so as to enable connections to occur between Jacks Point and Henley Downs through the gully systems; to protect the natural character of the vicinity; and to maintain a continuous character between the two areas.
- 14.4** The balance of the site, mainly the valley floor to the north and the lower slopes of Peninsula Hill, are to be managed as one area, the Agriculture, Conservation and Recreation Area.
- 14.4.1** The objectives and policies for the management of this ACRAA are inconsistent attempting to enable the construction of infrastructure and servicing within an area intended for agriculture, conservation and recreation. The structure plan should identify an activity area for infrastructure and servicing and it should have its own objectives and policies in order to facilitate these functions while retaining the appropriate use of the ACRAA.
- 14.4.2** The controls over the management of the landscape within the ACRAA are considerably diminished in this plan change proposal over that which currently applies within the Jacks Point zone, except in regard to subdivision which is a controlled activity currently and which is proposed to become discretionary. As much of this area is located within the area determined by the Environment Court to be Outstanding Natural Landscape (Wakatipu Basin) this is of concern. The landscape management of this area should be as least as stringent as that currently in place. The management of the valley floor could be less stringent, more in keeping with the management of the Visual Amenity landscape in other parts of the District. The management of the margins of SH 6 should be structured to facilitate the mounding and planting intended to provide mitigation for the built form within the development areas.
- 14.5** Under the proposed plan change only the wetland is to be managed for its biodiversity value, the main protection being left for the indigenous ecosystems of the site being controls on the clearance of indigenous vegetation. Further, the existing design controls specify a wide range of ecologically appropriate indigenous species which are required to be used in both public and private landscaping and which contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity throughout the zone. It is proposed that these would no longer apply within the Henley Downs zone. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the Henley Downs area is critical to the maintenance of the landscape character of the vicinity and of the area's integration with Jacks Point. The proposed changes could result in two disparate developments existing side by side with an overall reduction in the quality of the environment.

LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL LTD



Marion Read
PRINCIPAL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT



NB. This is a sketch only. The final location of the boundaries of the open space areas should be determined by survey on the ground.