

Before the Queenstown Lakes District
Council

In the matter of The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

And The Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan Stage 3; Stream
18; Settlement Zone

**Summary Evidence of Ben Espie for Universal Developments (Hawea) Limited
#3248**

04 August 2020

Submitter's solicitors:
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- 1 In relation to the effects on landscape character, the submission site is considerably less sensitive to landscape change than the vast majority of locations within the rural parts of the district and is suitable for urban/suburban development. This is primarily because:
 - a) It is immediately adjacent to an urban area.
 - b) It is on flat valley floor land that is of limited productive value in a location that accords with traditional settlement patterns.
 - c) It does not impart classically pastoral or picturesque aesthetics.
 - d) It is not part of, and is well separated from, any ONL or ONF.
 - e) It is not prominent or particularly visually displayed.
- 2 Regarding the RCLs of the district generally, in my opinion, the above factors place the site as an area of RCL that is of low sensitivity in relation to urban expansion.
- 3 In relation to a new or expanded area of urban/suburban development, the treatment of its boundaries or edges is important in relation to both visual and landscape character issues. Regarding the proposed relief, the edges of an expanded Hawea will be formed by Domain Road (with a green buffer), an area of GIZ (with green buffer around it) and the farmland of the Gladstone flood hazard area (again with a green buffer strip).
- 4 The relief sought has been amended in that the proposed edge buffer strips have been extended. Additionally, I understand that subdivision is proposed to be at least a Restricted Discretionary activity with landscaping as a consideration and specific provisions requiring comprehensive landscape treatment of the BRA areas that form the buffer spaces. As set out in my evidence, I consider that these various measures will provide for appropriate edges to an expanded urban area, including the eastern edge (that Ms Gilbert has some concern about). They will provide for a softer eastern edge than was considered appropriate by the SHA consenting processes and associated resource consent (SH190005).
- 5 Certainly, the character of Hawea township itself will change in relation to how it is today. It will become a considerably larger town with newly developed urban/suburban areas. In reality, this will happen even in the absence of the proposed relief. The PDP, via Stages 1 and 3, rezones Hawea to LDSR (allowing 1 residence per 450m²), with an area of LLRA. Additionally, the SHA will create a significant new urban area and the consented Streat development will create a rural living area south of Cemetery Road. I consider that these changes will alter what Ms Gilbert describes as a “somewhat sleepy” identity. This has already happened to a degree through the subdivision development that has occurred over

recent years between the moraine slope and Cemetery Road (Timsfield etc). Obviously, an expanded town brings with it more amenities (not necessarily related to landscape) such as trails, reserves, shops, employment, childcare, less reliance on commuting, etc.

- 6 In terms of broad-scale landscape planning, an urban edge as provided for by the proposed relief will be logical and defensible, considerably more so than the current situation.
- 7 There will be some effects on the views and southern outlook of elevated residential properties within existing Hawea township. However, due to the orientation of these views and the presence of existing development, I consider that visual amenity will be affected to a low to moderate degree in the short term and that this will reduce as the new suburban development (particularly street trees) gain some maturity.
- 8 The visual amenity experience of local road users will change in that Cemetery Road will become a suburban road while Domain Road will become an urban edge. I do not consider that this will bring about an inappropriate visual amenity situation, particularly when we consider the reserve buffer strips and controls that form part of the proposed relief.
- 9 Overall, I consider that the site is suitable for urban/suburban expansion as described in my evidence. While some effects on landscape character and visual amenity are inevitable, I consider that they have been well mitigated and that the location and characteristics of the site mean that these effects will be much less than they would be in many other rural locations within the district.

Ben Espie

Dated this 4th day of August 2020