

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of a hearing on submissions on a proposed Variation to Chapter 21 Rural Zone of the Proposed District Plan to introduce Priority Area Landscape Schedules

ON BEHALF OF Gertrude Saddlery Ltd (200)

SUMMARY EVIDENCE OF BENJAMIN ESPIE (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)

24th October 2023

1. My name is Benjamin Espie. My qualifications and experience are set out in my primary evidence dated 11th September 2023.
2. In my primary evidence, I include comments regarding the Shotover River and Priority Area 21.22.3 and the associated schedule. My primary evidence on this matter was in response to the primary evidence of Ms Gilbert dated 11th August 2023. One point that I make in my primary evidence (paragraphs 6, 7 and 34) is that the public notice of the variation included a link to a GIS map of Priority Areas. The GIS map had two layers, one with a green shade and one with a yellow shade. Neither layer was given preference.
3. In her rebuttal evidence, Ms Gilbert agrees with my primary evidence that the relevant Priority Area is correctly and appropriately an ONF Priority Area comprised of the Shotover River corridor and it does not include land that is outside of the ONF. To this effect, Ms Gilbert and I signed a Joint Witness Statement dated the 4th of October 2023 that confirmed our agreed position and confirmed the associated Schedule as it is attached to Ms Gilbert's rebuttal evidence.
4. I have read a Summary of Planning Evidence prepared by Mr Brett Giddens dated 19th of October 2023 and have been asked to comment on it. My comments follow.
5. At various points (paragraphs 18 and 24), Mr Giddens suggests that the Joint Witness Statement referred to above is based in erroneous mapping. That is not correct. The mapping that forms Figure 1 and Appendix 3 of Ms Gilbert's primary evidence is the mapping that she and I agree on and that mapping is taken from the GIS map that was part of the public notice of the variation. At the time of our witness conferencing, Ms Gilbert and I were both well aware of the different iterations of planning maps with respect to the ONF PA. Our agreement on the appropriate map and schedule was based upon our expertise and our professional opinions. We agreed that the correct and appropriate Priority Area is an ONF Priority Area that does not include land that is outside the ONF of the Shotover River corridor. Reasoning for this is set out in full in my primary evidence.

6. Mr Giddens' summary statement does not take account of Ms Gilbert's amended position as set out in her rebuttal evidence. In her rebuttal evidence, she not only confirms that only the ONF is within the Priority Area, she also attaches an amended version of the relevant schedule that reframes the attributes and values identification from her primary evidence so that the schedule now only describes the ONF river corridor.
7. At paragraph 29.1 (and others) of Mr Giddens' summary, it is perhaps unclear that all landscape witnesses involved in the previous Commissioner hearing regarding the Gertrude land agreed that the Gertrude land is not part of the ONF of the river corridor. There is some disagreement as to whether the Gertrude land is part of an ONL, and this is subject to the outstanding appeal, but no landscape witness suggests that the Gertrude land is part of the ONF of the Shotover River. My primary evidence sets out an assessment of landscape attributes and values that support this conclusion and that the Gertrude site is distinct from the river corridor ONF.
8. Photographs attached to my primary evidence are also helpful in this regard. The Gertrude land is of recognisably distinct topography and cannot be seen from the adjacent stretch of the Shotover River gorge.
9. Despite ONLs and ONFs both being referred to in Section 6b of the Act, they are distinct landscape entities. A feature is different to a landscape. This is recognised in the PDP and in the various identified Priority Areas.
10. As set out in my primary evidence, I consider that to include the Gertrude land within the Shotover River Priority Area, thereby creating a hybrid ONF/ONL Priority Area would lead to a particularly unusual, anomalous, illogical and unnecessary situation. This would be the only Priority Area in the district that contains land of more than one landscape category. In terms of landscape attributes and values, the Gertrude land (being 6.6ha of former farmland, until recently covered in wilding conifers and containing three dwellings) is entirely distinct from the Shotover River corridor and should not be included in the same Priority Area.
11. In the event that the Gertrude land is found to be of an ONL category (which will be decided by the relevant appeal), then strong Objectives and Policies in the PDP will protect its landscape values. There is no need to illogically attach the site to the Shotover River ONF Priority Area in order to achieve appropriate landscape outcomes.

Ben Espie

24th October 2023