

BEFORE INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONERS

IN THE MATTER

of a change under Part 1 of the First
Schedule of the Resource Management
Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER

of proposed Plan Change 50:
Queenstown Town Centre Zone
to the Queenstown Lakes District Plan

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF

JOHN BERNARD EDMONDS

FOR IHG QUEENSTOWN LIMITED AND CARTER QUEENSTOWN LIMITED

Dated November 2014

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My full name is John Bernard Edmonds. I hold the qualification of Bachelor of Regional Planning from Massey University, and am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute. I have 20 years' experience in planning and resource management, spanning policy and resource consent roles in local government and as a private consultant. I spent five years at Nelson City Council and six years with the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC), most of that time (1997-2001) as the District Planner. In January 2001 I went into private consultancy.
- 1.2 I have read the Environment Court's Practice Note 2014 and in particular Part 7 that refers to the expert witnesses, which I understand will become operative on 1 December 2014, and I agree to comply with it. Except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person, this written evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in this evidence.
- 1.3 I have read the section 42A report.

2.0 IHG QUEENSTOWN LIMITED AND CARTER QUEENSTOWN LIMITED - SUBMISSION #32

- 2.1 The submitter (IHG) is the owner of 7,228m² of land located within the rectangular block bound by Lake Esplanade (Beach St), Lake Street, Man Street and Hay Street. This land holding includes the Crowne Plaza hotel building (Lot 1 DP15037) that comprises 140 guest rooms, four conference rooms and, restaurant and four retail shops. The remaining land within the submitter's ownership is located immediately uphill of the hotel and is comprised in four contiguous titles. These sites (ranging in size from 430 to 515m²) are either vacant or contain older houses and bungalows that are temporarily used for staff accommodation. There are a further five certificates of title (approximately 350m² each) that extend along the northern edge of the block, all of which adjoin Man Street.

2.2 This block of land falls steeply from Man Street to Lake Esplanade. Town Centre zoned land currently extends along the southern and eastern boundaries, while Plan Change 50 also proposes that land to the north of this block is also included within the Town Centre zone. The western edge of this block of land is bordered by Lake Street, with High Density Residential (Sub-Zone A) land along the opposite side of Lake Street.

2.3 The Council owned land above Man Street is elevated 2 to 3 metres above the level of Man Street, and is separated from Man Street by the James Clouston Memorial Reserve. This is a Recreation Reserve that extends as a 25m wide strip along the edge of the Council camp ground land – along both Man Street and Hay Street. This Reserve has the effect of, amongst other things, setting any future development upon this land further back from Man Street. As a result, the impact of any future development within the submitter's block of land is mitigated by elevation, physical separation and the presence of a number of mature trees within the James Clouston Memorial Reserve.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 The key issues relate to:

- The inclusion of the land within the Town Centre zone; and
- Building height; and
- Rules relating to noise and verandahs; and
- Location of the Conference Venue

3.2 The primary submission of Margaret Walker (50/19) relates to the same land area.

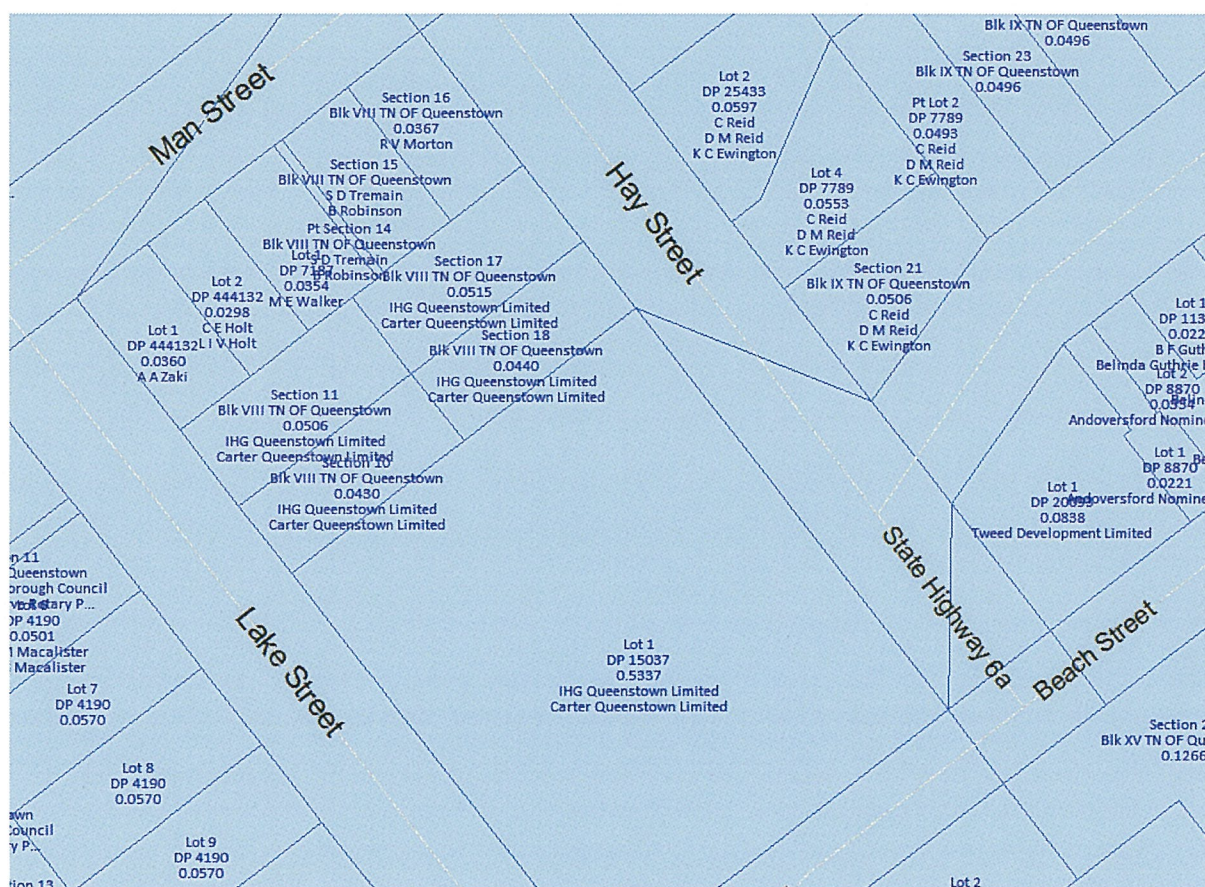
3.3 IHG lodged a further submission opposing Mrs. Walker's primary submission.

3.4 IHG have also submitted in support of that aspect of the Memorial Property submission, as it relates to defining a location for a conference venue near the edge of the Town Centre (50/ 39/ 07), and in support of the Remarkable Jet submission as it relates to the staged expansion of the town centre (50/ 49/ 02).

- 3.5 The reporting planner also notes that part of the submission of Craig Stobo (50/ 21/ 01) is relevant to this block of land. No further submission was lodged to Mr. Stobo's submission, as his concerns can be addressed through an explanation in this evidence.
- 3.6 The IHG site is an appropriate and logical extension and should in my opinion be included in any expansion of the Town Centre zone.
- 3.7 The inclusion of this block of land within the Town Centre is consistent with the Council's objectives of maintaining compact commercial centres and the general principles of consolidation that occur throughout the District Plan. It maintains and enhances the existing pattern of land use through the efficient use of the land.
- 3.8 The following sections address matters of detail raised in both IHG's and Mrs. Walker's submissions.

4.0 BUILDING HEIGHT

- 4.1 This is a steeply sloping block of land, evidenced by the steps part way down Hay Street, and the grade of Lake Street. This provides an opportunity for expansive views across Queenstown Bay, the Gardens and to the Remarkables. It also enables buildings to be stepped up the site consistent with the slope of the land
- 4.2 Under the operative plan there are two associated height rules for this block. The hotel and has a specific height that is defined by a particular geometric shape, while the remaining sites are subject to the standard height rules for residential land.



- 4.3 The 'geometric shape' rule is unique for this site, and the reporting planner includes the image in his planning report at page 90. This rule creates the building volume envelope within which development can occur. It is based upon a 7 metre high measurement at all external site boundaries, and then the shape also expands to incorporate the existing hotel buildings.
- 4.4 The standard residential height rule provides for a maximum height of 7 metres, which is based upon and reflects the original shape of the ground. This often requires a surveyor to interpolate the original ground level – and in some cases to disregard areas of cut or fill.
- 4.5 The proposed height rules appear as the 8th and 9th bullet points under 10.6.5.2 (i)(a) on the right hand column of page 10-13, and are reproduced below:
- The maximum height for buildings on Lot 1 DP 15307 shall be defined by the measurements and images held with the electronic file described as Lot 1 DP 15307– Building Height. Refer Appendix 4 – Interpretative Diagrams, Diagram 8, except that the height of any lift or plant tower on Lot 1 DP 15307 shall be permitted to exceed this height limit by up to an additional 3 metres, provided that the area of that additional over-run shall have a total area of no more than 40m² and shall be located at least 10 metres from a road boundary.

- For land legally described as Sections 14, 15, 16, 17 Block VIII Town of Queenstown, Lots 1 and 2 DP 444132, and Lot 1 DP 7187 Zone Standard 7.5.5.3(v) will apply for all building heights.

4.6 Mrs Walker's submission states that the rules should be amended to also include reference to Sections 10, 11 and 18, while the reporting planner advises that these three sections of land are incorporated into the preceding rule that refers to this 'geometric shape'.

4.7 The Plan Change as notified makes no mention of either scenario, it is silent on Sections 10, 11 and 18. As a result the town centre height limit of 12m applies to these parcels of land.

4.8 However I have read the submission and the officer's report and realise the confusion that surrounds this issue. I also understand that Mrs. Walker enjoys views out over the bay and that this plan change needs to balance the amenity that she enjoys, while still providing for efficient redevelopment of land close to and part of the CBD. This 'Beach Street block' has a consistent grade of about 24⁰, so that it falls quite steeply from Man Street to Lake Esplanade an elevation change of about 32 metres. Downhill development will not necessarily interrupt views of the people above.

4.9 Various options exist to resolve this height issue including:

- amending the 8th bullet point to include reference to Sections 10, 11 and 18 so that they fall within the 'geometric shape' rule
- amending the 9th bullet point to include reference to Sections 10, 11 and 18 – so that they fall under the Residential zone height rule; or
- incorporate the most elevated land (Section 11) within the 9th bullet point, while retaining the notified 12m height limit on the lower Sections 11 and 18 (this would mean that the two most uphill IHG titles would have a standard residential limit for 7m); or
- Add to Site Standard (10.6.5.1 (ix)) with a new rule (j) that provides for Sections 10, 11 and 18 with a residential height limit of 7m. This would enable consideration of applications as a Restricted Discretionary Activity, consistent with the new height limits that are being applied throughout the plan change area.
- As above, however incorporate all of the land that is uphill of the hotel (that is Sections 10, 11, 14 to 17 and Lots 1 and 2 DP 444132, and Lot 1 DP 7187) and add to

Site Standard (10.6.5.1 (ix)) a new rule (j) – providing all of this land with a 7m height limit, under a Restricted Discretionary Activity category.

- 4.10 The relief sought in the primary submission of IHG includes “any other related or consequential relief that may be deemed appropriate...”. Building height in the new PC50 areas is being treated under Restricted Discretionary rather than the usual Non-Complying consent processes that apply to most other zones. So, all newly zoned areas in the Lakeview and Isle Street sub-zones will be under this new regime. Given the uncertainty that the notified plan change creates for building height in this area and the trend towards a lower consent threshold for height assessment generally then the 5th option would be appropriate.

5.0 RULES RELATING TO NOISE AND VERANHAHS

- 5.1 The proposed zoning for this land includes specific reference to the residential noise rule, rather than the town centre standard. The IHG submission seeks the consistency with the rest of the Town Centre zone.
- 5.2 The reporting officer (page 90) simply stands by the section 32 evaluation report.
- 5.3 The operative rule for noise in the Town Centre zone is a zone standard (non-complying activity to breach), and it says at page 10-36 (rule 10.6.5.2 (ii)(c)) that noise that is “received in another zone shall comply with the noise limits set in the zone standards for that zone”. The closest adjoining zone is the High Density Residential zone – on the western side of Lake Street. The buildings within this zone are located approximately 30m away (building to building). The standards for the residential zone range from 40 to 50 dB LAeq (15 min) between night and day time. It is my understanding that any noise generated within the Beach Street block would need to meet these standards at the facade of the closest residential building on the western side of Lake Street.
- 5.4 I consider that this rule is appropriate to be applied to the Beach Street block. This rule already applies to the other interface areas where Town Centre and High Density Residential meet one another, and there is no reason to suggest an alternative rule framework is necessary for this particular block of land. The Chiles Ltd report that accompanies the plan

change considers that the other areas being re-zoned should adopt the town centre noise rules, and considers this to be appropriate. At page 4 of his report Dr. Chiles comments:

“...all activity in the town centre zone, and by default in the plan change area after re-zoning, has to comply with 50 dB daytime and 40 dB night-time noise limits when received in the high density residential zone. These limits are typical for residential zones, although at the lower end of the range, with some districts specifying 55 dB during the day and 45 dB at night, which are also the values recommended in NZS 6802. It is considered that the existing 50 dB and 40 dB limits provide for a good level of residential amenity and will provide protection from sleep disturbance. .

- 5.5 From a planning perspective, I consider that if the Town Centre zone noise rules are appropriate in other areas of town centre expansion – then they should similarly apply to the Beach Street block.
- 5.6 The other matter relates to Verandahs; in particular the suggested addition to Site Standard 10.6.5.1 (vi) to require a verandah alongside the Hay Street frontage of the site as part of any building development or redevelopment.
- 5.7 The rule already exists and applies to those sites on the eastern side of Hay Street that are zoned Town Centre. The plan change adjusts the scope to that part of the Hay Street frontage between Beach and Man Streets. As a result of including the Beach Street block within the town centre – the rule would apply to any building alterations anywhere within the hotel site or either of the two uphill sites that are owned by IHG.
- 5.8 At the corner of Beach Street and Hay Street – the Crowne Plaza hotel has been developed with three retail tenancies, with full height glazed frontages built up to the road boundary. These tenancies have limited pedestrian verandah cover.
- 5.9 Uphill of these retail tenancies, Hay Street is partly pedestrianised as a steep walkway that meanders up the middle of the unformed road reserve, then opening out to a cul-de-sac turning head. The adjoining frontage of the Crowne Plaza is densely landscaped, with both the outside wall of hotel rooms and concrete block boundary walls. There is only limited pedestrian access along this frontage. Above the hotel buildings is a parking area that is held within the hotel title. Further uphill are two houses owned by IHG with no adjacent footpath, with the Morton house further above again, on the Man Street corner.

5.10 The rule would require that a veranda be constructed along the frontage of the property within which any building alteration occurs. That means that internal alterations within the Crown Plaza may necessitate a veranda along the full Hay Street boundary of that site. Establishing a verandah along this frontage will provide no additional public benefits in the short to medium term. It should not be incumbent upon the landowner to have to seek a Restricted Discretionary resource consent for not providing a Hay Street every time they undertake internal alterations to the hotel.

5.11 I suggest that the rule be amended to state:

Hay Street (Beach Street to Man Street where a footpath immediately adjoins the site)

6.0 LOCATION OF THE CONVENTION CENTRE

6.1 The IHG further submission supports part of the Memorial Property Limited submission, where it seeks for the convention centre to be located closer to town.

6.2 Mr. Michael Wyatt is providing a separate brief of evidence

6.3 The Issues section of the Town Centre zone at pages 10-1 to 10-3 provides a useful assessment of the issues facing this area. The key issue reads as “the consolidation and maintenance of existing town centres”. It raises the concern that fragmentation can result in loss of vitality, convenience and accessibility. This is continued through to Objective 1 and in particular Policy 1.1. The plan change does not make any change to these matters, aside from a couple of tweaks to the associated ‘Implementation Methods’.

6.4 This same strong theme of consolidation of the Town Centre is carried over into the specific objectives and policies for the Queenstown town centre zone, at pages 10-15, including proposed Policy 1.2.

6.5 These objectives and policies reinforce the physical setting of Queenstown Bay, and the combination of topography and landuse that has resulted in a compact Town Centre area, which in turn has resulted in a vibrant and busy place.

- 6.6 In my opinion, the most appropriate location within the Lakeview sub-zone for a conference venue, where it will best achieve those objectives of urban consolidation is at the uphill corner of Hay and Man Streets; in that area of 'camp ground' that is (and would continue to be) framed by the James Clouston Memorial Reserve. This location is convenient, accessible and visible. Further, it will define the edge of the town centre area, which together with the 'Beach Street block' would create a defensible western boundary. The method of achieving this might include a specific Conference Venue sub-zone.

John Edmonds