

**BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN-LAKES DISTRICT COUCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of Proposed Private Plan Change 52 to the  
Queenstown Lakes District Plan

**ON BEHALF OF** **MOUNT CARDRONA STATION LIMITED**  
Requestor

---

**EVIDENCE STATEMENT OF BENJAMIN ESPIE  
(LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)**

**26<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017**

---

- 1 My name is Benjamin Espie. I reside in Queenstown. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (with honours) from Lincoln University and Bachelor of Arts from Canterbury University. I am a member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and was the chairman of the Southern Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects between 2007 and 2015. I am also a member of the Resource Management Law Association. Since November 2004 I have been a director of Vivian and Espie Limited, a specialist resource management and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown. Between March 2001 and November 2004 I was employed as Principal of Landscape Architecture by Civic Corporation Limited, a resource management consultancy company contracted to the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**).
- 2 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained within the Environment Court Practice Note of December 2014 and agree to comply with it. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on information I have been given by another person. I confirm that I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed herein.
- 3 I prepared a Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment Report dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (**my report**) regarding Proposed Plan Change 52 (**PC52**) that sets out my professional opinions regarding the proposal. By way of summary, the key conclusions of my report are:
  - *The existing MCSSZ provides for a specific form of village development on a terrace landform close to the floor of the Cardrona Valley. The zone is located adjacent to the Cardrona Alpine Resort access road. The landscape character and visual amenity that the Cardrona Valley provides are of high quality and are valued by the community; the valley is categorised as an ONL.*
  - *The PPC seeks to reconfigure activities within the enabled village development. Most relevantly, the lower part of the zone will provide for a 12-hole golf course, while there will also be a slight uphill extension to residential activities.*
  - *In relation to landscape character, I consider that at a broad scale, the PPC will have a negligible effect on the landscape character of the Cardrona Valley. At a fine scale, there will be some effect in that the exact nature of the village development that eventuates will be more characterised by recreation (i.e. golf) than under the existing situation. While this is a change, it does not amount to an adverse effect on landscape character.*
  - *In relation to views and visual amenity, I consider that the replacement of an area of built development with golf course activity will have some potential positive effects in that the zone will ultimately appear softer and greener and therefore less incongruous with its setting. Similarly, the replacement of some open space with extended built development will have some potential adverse effects. The analysis provided in this report shows that the proposed new open space area is more visually discernible than the proposed area of extended built development. Therefore, I consider that visual effects will generally be positive but of a slight degree.*
- 4 Since the time of my report, PC52 has been subject to public submissions and Mr Compton-Moen has prepared a review report (dated 15 June 2017) regarding the urban design, landscape and visual effects of PC52 on

behalf of the QLDC. Additionally, Mr Bryce has prepared a planner's report in relation to Section 42A (dated 16 June 2017).

- 5 In relation to public submissions, I agree with Mr Bryce's Section 42a report in that "*no submitter has raised concerns relating to landscape and visual amenity values as a result of the Plan Change as a whole*"<sup>1</sup>. Some submissions raise issues that are partially landscape-related, in regard to provisions for Activity Areas 6 and 7b, the final treatment of the ski field car-park area and a minor change to the allowable plant species relating to Activity Area 3. These submissions are primarily about mechanisms (i.e. details of the provisions that will ultimately be incorporated into the District Plan) rather than outcomes. I also understand that Mr Bryce offers solutions to these issues in his report and the Requestor accepts and adopts Mr Bryce's recommendations in this regard. I therefore do not consider that further comments from me on these partially landscape-related issues can be of significant assistance to the Commissioners.
- 6 The findings of Mr Compten-Moen's report that relate to landscape issues very largely accord with the findings of my report. In relation to the changes that PC52 will bring, I summarise Mr Compten-Moen's key findings as follows:
  - *I agree with the findings in the Landscape Assessment, that the golf course will have slight effects on landscape character at best. The golf course will have no discernible effect on the visual effects created by the Operative Plan Change, with a possible positive visual effect from a number of Viewpoints, including Viewpoint 2 and the Roaring Meg Pack Track, where proposed buildings will be replaced by green fairways and landscape planting*<sup>2</sup>.
  - *From a landscape and visual perspective, the proposed changes to the village core will have no noticeable effect. There is a small positive change with development largely moving away from the area controlled by Village Height Restriction Lines (Structure Plan B), with the exception of a small portion of AA 1b, and being replaced by the golf course. As mentioned in the LVIA text, the buildings will be predominantly residential in character and the internal movement of zones within the Structure Plan will not be readily visible from outside*<sup>3</sup>.
  - *In terms of car-parking I agree with the assessment in the Landscape and Visual Effects report. I do not consider the removal of the playing fields or the inclusion of the tennis courts to have an effect on the landscape character or visual amenity of the area, subject to lighting controls ensuring no upward light spill is incorporated into the rules*<sup>4</sup>.
  - *I agree with the findings of both reports in that the proposed extension of Activity Area 4 outside of the footprint of the Operative Structure Plan will result in effects 'not more than slight' and that the changes are consistent with the Operative Structure Plan. There are benefits in moving development away from the front of the eastern escarpment where height restrictions are required to the west where the area is visually less prominent*<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Nigel Bryce, "Planner's section 42a report for Plan Change 52: Mount Cardrona Station Special Zone", dated 16 June 2017, Section 6.2.

<sup>2</sup> David Compten-Moen "Changes to Plan Change 52 – Mt Cardrona Station", dated 15 June, 2017, Section 2.1.3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Section 2.2.3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Section 2.3.3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, Section 2.4.3.

- *Following submissions, a request was made to remove macrocarpa from the plant list and replace with Mountain Beech or a similar species to ensure that only species suited to the environment are planted, such as silver tussock. While macrocarpa trees and shelter belts are common in the immediate area and grow well in the conditions, the suggested change has merit from an ecological and character perspective<sup>6</sup>.*
- *In terms of landscape visual effects, the changes are considered negligible in comparison with the Operative Structure Plan, and in some cases positive<sup>7</sup>.*

7 I agree with all of the above. Regarding the provisions that are mentioned by Mr Compten-Moen that relate to light spill and the replacement of macrocarpa with native beech, I understand that Mr Bryce's report recommends provisions to deal with these issues and the Requestor agrees with those recommendations.

8 As is set out in my report, and in Mr Compten-Moen's review report, I do not consider that PC52 will result in any significant adverse effects in relation to landscape character or visual amenity.

**Ben Espie**

**vivian+espie**

**26<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, Section 2.7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Section 3.