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**URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT:  
MOUNT CARDRONA STATION – PRIVATE PLAN  
CHANGE**

**URBAN DESIGN REPORT**

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FOR

**MT CARDRONA STATION LTD**

BY

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NOVEMBER 2016

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been prepared in support of a request for a Private Plan Change, made by Mount Cardrona Station Ltd (“**MCSL**”) in respect of the Mount Cardrona Station Special Zone (“**Special Zone**”) under the Operative Queenstown Lakes District Plan (“**the Plan**”). It refines and adapts the planning framework determined following Plan Change 18 (“**PC18**”), made operative on 8 December 2011, which created the Special Zone.

The Special Zone has a total site area of 131ha. The Plan Change seeks to broadly retain the basic structure of the Special Zone, but provide for a golf tourism activity through the establishment of a 12-hole golf course and related infrastructure and facilities across 21.84ha of the site. The site, with its varied topography and outstanding natural setting, will create a high amenity golf development which encourages short-stay visitation and tourism-related activity that complements the ski-field related activities already in existence.

The golf activities and resulting settlement structure are a compatible ‘fit’ in urban design terms and can enable a well-designed development that remains responsive to its landscape setting. The site will remain functionally linked and complementary to Cardrona Village, bringing greater residential and tourist catchment to the Cardrona Valley.

This assessment has considered the proposal's own merit as well as compared it to the operative planning provisions and structure plan. The new structure plan proposal remains in line with the Operative District Plan Section 12.21 objectives and policy for development in the Special Zone, and still reflects accepted industry standards for urban design.

The Private Plan Change could be approved on urban design grounds subject to the recommendations outlined in this report.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared in support of a request for a Private Plan Change, made by Mount Cardrona Station Ltd (“**MCSL**”) in respect of the Mount Cardrona Station Special Zone (“**Special Zone**”) under the Operative Queenstown Lakes District Plan (“**the Plan**”). It refines and adapts the planning framework determined following Plan Change 18 (“**PC18**”), made operative on 8 December 2011, which created the Special Zone. This request is being made to Queenstown Lakes District Council under the Resource Management Act 1991 (“**RMA**”).

The Special Zone has a total site area of 131ha. The proposed change seeks to broadly retain the basic structure of the Special Zone but enable the establishment of a 12-hole golf course and related infrastructure and facilities west of the eastern escarpment and south of Homestead Gully across 21.8ha of the site (**Figure 1** in the attached appendix). The proposed change would continue to be underpinned by urban design principles and maintain the establishment of a well-designed urban structure that responds to its landscape setting, providing for a mix of activities and land use densities.

The access point to the site from Cardrona Valley Road, the protected open space buffer around the development area (including the two historic water races and the Homestead Gully corridor) and east-west open space ‘fingers’ that follow the natural land depressions are all proposed to be retained. Development is largely contained to the same area (28.3ha), but in comparison to the operative Special Zone, the location of the village centre, the layout of the internal movement network and the mix and location of residential housing and accommodation activity areas are proposed to change. Some modifications have also been proposed to accommodate planned golf activities, while others seek to establish a less rigid ‘urban’ structure, promoting a more informal urbanism familiar in rural settings (notably at the interface between development and open space areas).

A concept masterplan prepared by Baxter Design Ltd has also been provided. It is not part of the formal request. It has been considered to the extent that it provides an illustration of how a golf course could be accommodated on the site. The master plan also includes a possible subdivision structure of blocks and streets. In these respects, the master plan is a helpful additional design reference. Where the master plan becomes more speculative and untested is in the high-density areas where individual units and a hotel outline are depicted. This is a very detailed design matter and it is not possible to adequately assess whether or not outcomes as depicted would be appropriate in terms of the proposed planning provisions without substantial additional (land use consent) information. The concept master plan is illustrated as **Figure 2** in the attached appendix.

MCSL’s proposal to enable golf tourism on the site is compatible with the residential and visitor accommodation development already zoned for the site. With its varied topography and outstanding natural setting, the site has the ability to create a quality golfing destination which encourages short-stay visitation and tourism-related activity complementing the ski-related activity already likely to support the Special Zone. This is a logical co-location decision given the isolated and seasonal nature of the ski-related tourism within Cardrona Valley, and will have economic and community benefits within the Special Zone, including a more stable year-long economy.

General background urban design analysis in support of the operative Special Zone at Mount Cardrona Station is provided within the *Urban Design Conceptual Development Plan Report* (July 2007), prepared by Urbanismplus Ltd. It has been relied on given that the site's conditions and environment have not materially changed since that time, and its analysis will not be repeated within this report. It is noted that both Ian Munro and Nicola Tagiston (nee Albiston) were employees of Urbanismplus Ltd in 2007 and both contributed to its work on the Special Zone.

This report is limited to an assessment of urban design merit of the Plan Change. For a full and rounded analysis of the proposal, the separate plan change request, assessment of effects on the environment, and Section 32 report prepared by Brown & Company Planning Group Ltd should be relied on.

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## 2. SCOPE AND INVOLVEMENT

Ian Munro and Nicola Tagiston have been engaged to provide an urban design assessment of the proposed change. Ian Munro and Nicola Tagiston are both qualified and self-employed urban designers.

This report has been prepared jointly, however both Ian Munro and Nicola Tagiston are able to each adopt the full content of this report as their own individual professional opinion.

The process followed to undertake this urban design assessment is as follows:

1. A site visit to Mount Cardrona Station and Cardrona Village was undertaken in October 2016.
2. Consultation with MCSL and its consultant team occurred to understand market and product preferences and the design changes proposed.
3. Preliminary feedback and comments were given to MCSL.
4. The final concept masterplan, proposed structure plan maps and District Plan Section 12.21-22 were received and reviewed.
5. This report has been prepared.

The drawings relied on for the assessment were:

- › In relation to the masterplan, drawings prepared by Baxter Design Ltd labelled "Mount Cardrona Station Concept Masterplan", reference 2660-SK22 dated November 2016.
- › In relation to the proposed Structure Plan, drawings prepared by Clark Fortune MacDonald Ltd labelled "Structure Plan A – Mt Cardrona Station Structure Plan",

“Structure Plan C – Public Access Easements & Walkways”, “Structure Plan D – Mitigation Planting Plan” dated November 2016.

- ▶ The Mount Cardrona Station design guidelines, (based on a similar document in the Operative zone) dated 23 November 2016.

The proposed Mount Cardrona Station Special Zone District Plan provisions relied on for the assessment were:

- ▶ A tracked changed copy of the Operative Queenstown Lakes District Plan Section 12.21 “Mount Cardrona Station Special Zone”, and Section 12.22 “Mount Cardrona Station Special Zone Rules” prepared by Brown & Company Planning Group Ltd dated 23 November 2016.

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### 3. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

There are a number of considerations relevant to the design of development within the Special Zone, from the strategic to the very local. They form a framework against which the proposed changes have been tested.

The framework is not a fixed or scored system of ticks or crosses. It is an analysis taking into account the benefits, limitations, compromises and hard choices that all large-scale development proposals are based on. This reflects that despite being for a green field area, the site is far from a blank palette. Existing land use zoning, landscape sensitivities, roads and infrastructure deficiencies, development realities and costs, market expectations, and the Council’s policy directions for development of the Cardrona Valley all exert influences that substantially narrow possible design options.

The Urbanismplus Ltd *Urban Design Conceptual Design Plan* report and subsequent *Statement of Evidence* submitted by Director Kobus Mentz (ENV-2009-CHC-027) assessed the then-proposed PC18 on the basis of the following framework:

- ▶ The characteristics of the site;
- ▶ The Cardrona Community Plan (2003);
- ▶ The then-draft Queenstown Lakes Urban Design Strategy (2009);
- ▶ The then-draft Cardrona Valley Structure Plan (2009); and
- ▶ Best practice urban design principles found within Ministry for the Environment’s *People + Places + Spaces Urban Design Guide* (2002), the *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* (2005), and the Ministry of Justice *CPTED Guidelines* (2005).

For simplicity and consistency, the current proposal has been considered against an updated version of the same PC18 framework (**Figure 3** in the attached appendix), reflecting that the strategic and regulatory planning environment has not significantly changed during the intervening years. The updates include the now adopted status of the *Queenstown Lakes Urban Design Strategy* and *Cardrona Valley Structure Plan* documents, and the now-operative policy provisions for the Special Zone under the Queenstown Lakes District Plan. The operative Special Zone has been excluded from “Stage 1” of the current Proposed District Plan and it is understood that the proposed

provisions do not at this time apply to the Special Zone. Notwithstanding this, a review of the notified district-wide provisions has not identified any significant change of note that relates to an urban design assessment (see also below).

As the proposal is being considered under the RMA, greatest weighting has been given to the policy and rule framework set out in the Operative District Plan (Mount Cardrona Station Special Zone) provisions.

### **Queenstown Lakes Urban Design Strategy**

The *Queenstown Lakes Urban Design Strategy* (November 2009) establishes six key urban design goals that influence and guide the Council's strategy for urban environments. These include:

- ▶ Distinctive built form – creating neighbourhoods that reflect their people, culture and history.
- ▶ High quality public places – that complement the appeal of the natural setting and foster economic vitality and community well-being.
- ▶ Consolidated growth – within urban boundaries with walkable, mixed use neighbourhoods that help reduce travel time and urban sprawl.
- ▶ Connected urban form – ensuring people have clear options of transport mode that are convenient, efficient and affordable.
- ▶ Sustainable urban environments – where the natural environment, land uses and transport network combine towards a healthier environment for everyone.
- ▶ Cohesive communities – where the urban environment promotes a stronger sense of local community by encouraging participation in public life.

### **Cardrona Valley Structure Plan**

The *Cardrona Valley Structure Plan* (2009) outlines the Council's strategic framework for growth across the Cardrona Valley, and provides guidance on the connection of the village and Special Zone:

- ▶ Enabling complementary development of the village and Special Zone that gives rise to a sustainable and integrated community.
- ▶ Maintaining a network of safe local trails and walkways between activity areas and to the wider strategic network.
- ▶ Safeguarding community facility provision along the southern boundary for sports fields and education purposes.

### **Proposed District Plan priorities**

In terms of general subdivision and development guidance, the following policy directions are emphasised within the *Proposed District Plan* (publicly notified version):

- ▶ Adequate on-site amenity including solar access, privacy, outlook and outdoor living space.
- ▶ A strong emphasis on public 'frontage' and the avoidance of rear lots wherever possible.
- ▶ Layouts that are compatible with underlying local heritage and archaeological sites, natural landform and environmental sensitivities such as climate and views.
- ▶ Thinking about future development outcomes at the time of subdivision.

### **Best Practice Literature**

Without repeating the material addressed in the previous urban design, domestic literature on urban design (such as the MfE's *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* (2005), the MfE's *People+Places+Spaces* (2002), or the MoJ's *National Guidelines for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (2005) emphasises the following qualities:

- ▶ A coherent and consistent urban structure that delineates public space and private space.
- ▶ The integration of public open space into obvious, prominent and well-fronted parts of the neighbourhood.
- ▶ A legible street hierarchy that helps users orientate and navigate.
- ▶ As much local variety and choice in housing product as is achievable.
- ▶ Visually distinctive and memorable buildings and neighbourhoods.
- ▶ Variety in the built form that is designed to weather well and be easy to maintain.

### **Overall Urban Design Framework**

On the basis of the above, the key urban design issues have been identified and will be used to focus the urban design assessment:

- ▶ Contributing to an efficiently laid out and coherent long term settlement structure.
- ▶ Ensuring safe and convenient connections between vehicular, pedestrian, cycle and bridle trail networks within the site and to the wider landscape.
- ▶ Providing an integrated series of open spaces with appeal, amenity, and usability.
- ▶ Providing for a diverse mix of compatible activities and uses which maximise choice and opportunity.
- ▶ Strengthen alpine village character by creating distinctive architectural responses, local employment opportunities and consolidated commercial activities around a village centre.

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## **4. SITE ANALYSIS**

### **SITE ANALYSIS**

The Special Zone site and its context in the wider Cardrona River Valley have been identified and described in the previous report prepared by Urbanismplus Ltd in support of the approved PC18, as well as the Council reports and decisions on those applications. They are referred to for detail.

A site visit in October 2016 has confirmed that nothing has materially changed since the Urbanismplus Ltd assessment. The following is of note:

- ▶ The site sits in a spectacular alpine landscape setting.
- ▶ Two historic water races wind through the upper portion of the site to the west.
- ▶ A steep gully 'Homestead Gully' runs through the northern portion of the site. This creates an edge and a focal feature for the development area.
- ▶ The site has been historically cleared and used as farm land and, more recently, the restored woolshed and Homestead site on the eastern boundary has been

used for functions. A small-scale tourist activity, guided horse bridle trails, is currently occurring on the site.

- › The site has frontage to Cardrona Valley Road to the east and sits to the south of the Cardrona Ski Field Access Road. Directly to the west of the Special Zone site the land rises steeply upwards.
- › The 12-lot Pringles Creek subdivision to the south of the site remains about half constructed.
- › The site is predominantly cleared and other than the cluster of mature trees on the north-eastern edge of the terrace and at the woolshed, there is no protected vegetation or other items worthy of retention.
- › The site is currently home to numerous rabbits and evidence of this habitation is visually obvious.

Key urban design issues for the site include:

- › Creating a sense of arrival to the site through the orientation, architectural quality and intensity of buildings fronting the Access Road and by concentrating commercial and community activities in a prominent 'core' area.
- › The management of residential density, with high density housing and visitor accommodation concentrated around the village core, then generally radiating outwards to low density development on the periphery of the development area.
- › Providing variation and choice in house types, retail and visitor accommodation activities.
- › Delivering 'outward' facing development to streets and public / publicly-accessible spaces.
- › Limiting development on visually and landscape-sensitive areas of the site including Homestead Gully, Pringles Creek, overland flow paths and the eastern escarpment face.
- › Developing a focal point through the concentration of land uses which generate economic activity and the provision of neighbourhood amenity.
- › Given the high quantity of visitors likely to the site, establishing a movement network that guides visitors to the public areas and away from the more private residential areas.
- › Retaining and protecting the two historic water races that wind through the upper portion of the site to the west.
- › Setting back buildings and activities from the eastern escarpment.

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## 5. URBAN DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSAL

A comparison of the development characteristics (zoned areas, unit yields, design controls) of the proposal with the operative Special Zone is provided on the following pages.

### *Development structure*

A comparison of the operative and proposed Structure Plan A (refer to **Table 1** below) establishes that the development area, zoned open space and total zoned area of the two schemes are broadly similar.

Table 1: Structure Plan A development zone comparison

	<b>Operative</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Area</b>	Mount Cardrona Station Structure Plan A	Structure Plan A
Zoned development area (excluding roads outside of Activity Areas and including Activity Area 5)	32.3ha	28.3ha
Zoned open space (including heritage open space, open space fingers and commonage areas)	93.8ha	100.2ha
<b>Total zoned area</b>	<b>126.1ha</b> <b>(131ha total zone approx.)</b>	<b>128.5ha</b> <b>(131ha total zone approx.)</b>

#### *Development area*

Development in the operative Plan zone is contained to four key blocks in a total area of 28.3ha, namely:

- › The homestead and woolshed sites at the entry to the site.
- › On the terrace area near the entrance of the site either side of the proposed Access Road.
- › A northern block to the north-west of the site near to the Ski Field Access road.
- › A central block located between the two open space connections.
- › A southern block.

Development is proposed to continue to adhere to the development setbacks established in the operative Plan. Most notably these include the eastern escarpment, the southern boundary adjacent to the Pringles Creek subdivision, historic water races to the west and Homestead Gully and Ski field Access Road to the north.

It is noted that development is now proposed to extend further west than in the Operative Plan, but not to an extent that creates any materially new or different urban design effect. This is most relevant in terms of the creation of a compact, contained neighbourhood nestled within the site's landform creases.

#### *Open space network*

Open space is abundant both within and outside of the plan change land. The proposal retains a high quantity of permanently protected open space (53%) surrounding the developable area (Activity Area 7a and 7b) with areas of greatest biodiversity and ecological value such as Homestead Gully left undisturbed. Like the operative Plan, two green linkages (Activity Area 6) penetrate through the development area in an east-west alignment following the natural land depressions. These creases or 'fingers' provide a unique amenity feature through the development and a separation buffer between house lots on either side. While the northernmost finger is narrower than on the operative plan at its eastern end, this is appropriate given the golf course is proposed to abut it to the north so as to retain, in total, a very wide and open aspect.

#### *Movement network*

In terms of the movement network, the proposal retains the existing access point / egress road both at Cardrona Valley Road (the main spine through the Valley) and the

Ski Field Access Road. The proposal depicts an internal grid-based network anchored by one 'U-shaped' road (Access Road) that circumnavigates around the development area effectively connecting southern and northern blocks. It is divided east-west by one other key road which will help distribute local traffic through the central development area. Lowest order local roads providing access to individual lots are not depicted on the proposed Structure Plan and their location and form are proposed to be controlled through the planning provisions and resource consents.

A comprehensive series of pedestrian and bridle paths and walkways circumnavigate and run internally through the site, including connections between residential areas and the village centre, along Homestead Gully, the eastern escarpment and to wider trail networks in all directions beyond the site boundaries. Connections are retained to several networks of tracks and trails in the wider environment beyond the site. This includes a trail link west towards Macetown, east to the Cardrona River and Roaring Meg Pack Track which connects networks on both sides of the valley into a significant sub-regional trail system.

*Development yields*

In terms of the residential and visitor accommodation component, the operative Special Zone is enabled to enable a yield of up to 1,000 primary residential and visitor accommodation units across Activity Areas 1 to 4. This calculation includes 600 mixed use, visitor accommodation, high density residential units within Activity Area 1a and 1b, and 350-400 residential lots elsewhere<sup>1</sup>.

A masterplan concept prepared by Clark Fortune McDonald & Associates associated with the operative Special Zone (**Figure 3** in the attached appendix) illustrated a possible solution that accommodated 344 primary residential and visitor accommodation units across the core residential areas of the site (Activity Areas 2-4). This is comparable with the the concept master plan associated with the Plan change request, prepared by Baxter Design, which provides at least 327 primary units. A breakdown of residential and visitor accommodation unit yield by type between the two master plan concepts is provided on **Table 2** below:

*Table 2: Masterplan residential / visitor accommodation unit yield comparison for Activity Areas 2-4*

	<b>Operative</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Residential / visitor accommodation type</b>	Masterplan by Clark Fortune McDonald	Concept masterplan by Baxter Design
'Medium density' lots (Activity Area 2a & 2b)	188	108
'Residential' lots (Activity Area 3 & 3b))	124	107
Low density 'hillside' lots (Activity Area 4)	28	30
'Golf frontage' lots		26
'Golf frontage medium density' lots		9

<sup>1</sup> For assumptions relating to the buildable area reference is made to the *Statement of Evidence* (including Appendices) submitted by Urbanisplus Ltd Director Kobus Mentz (ENV-2009-CHC-027).

'Golf course villa' lots		47
<b>Total</b>	<b>340 units</b>	<b>327 units</b>

Reference is made to the comparative development intensity diagram in **Figure 4** of the attached appendix. The proposal continues to provide for three main residential living areas:

- Low density, typically detached houses on 350-1,000+sqm size lots (Activity Areas 3 and 4).
- Medium density, typically detached houses on 200-250sqm minimum sized lots (Activity Areas 2a and 2b).
- Medium to high density, typically attached, terraced or semi-attached units including mixed use configurations (Activity Areas 1a and 1b).

The proposal continues to support a flexible approach to the provision of secondary dwelling units across Activity Areas 2-4. Overall, the requested Plan provisions will enable up to approximately 800 units to be delivered across the Special Zone. This is a theoretical reduction of approximately 200 units' total capacity, however in my view neither the operative nor the proposed 'limits' are likely to ever be reached and the master plans are a more useful indicator of likely yield.

The proposed Special Zone rules provide for visitor accommodation within Activity Areas 1-3 as per the operative zone provisions. Planning provisions do not distinguish between golf-related and other visitor accommodation uses. The masterplan depicts visitor accommodation associated with the golf course on sections of the site with views and frontage to the golf course.

Overall, the proposed changes will enable a theoretically similar but lower yield than the operative Special Zone. The operative provisions rely on a maximisation of secondary or minor units to achieve its maximum possible yield – which are in turn always more feasible on larger lots. The proposed plan has a smaller overall urban zoned area (approximately 4 net ha less), but provides for a higher average density. Between both the operative and proposed structure plans, there is ongoing uncertainty as to whether the market would support or enthusiastically take up the highest densities enabled, which would also work to reduce the actual yield that can be achieved under either scenario.

In terms of the practical development yield that is likely to occur, the two master plan exercises indicate that a comparable scale of development is likely between the operative Special Zone provisions and the proposed changes. Notwithstanding this, the year-round economy likely to result from the combination of golf course and ski-related activities is likely to result in a higher year-round occupation of the Special Zone and this is a positive attribute of the proposed changes.

#### *Relocation of the village centre*

Higher development intensity is envisaged within Activity Area 1a – the village core – which provides for commercial and visitor accommodation (hotel) uses including the provision of one landmark building (up to 24m in height). The village centre is positioned in a highly visible area of the site, located prominently on the right-hand arm of the 'U' shaped spine road and relatively 'central' within the development. Limited commercial activities are also possible within Activity Area 1b if demand proves higher than that anticipated for the village centre (Activity Area 1a). It is noted that if any such commercial

activity were to locate in Activity Area 1b, the urban form would need to be quite different to the purely residential outcome shown on the current Baxter Design Ltd concept master plan.

#### *Design Guidelines*

A design guideline, intended to help shape resource consent applications, is proposed. It is analogous with a similar document applicable in the Operative zone. It has been updated to reflect the Baxter Group master plan concept.

#### *Overall*

Overall and in broad terms, the proposal can be said to be a refinement of the operative planning approach rather than a fundamentally new proposition. This is evidenced most obviously by the extent to which the operative planning framework and rules are proposed to be retained.

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## **6. URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT**

### **THE PROPOSAL SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO AN EFFICIENTLY LAID OUT AND COHERENT LONG TERM SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE**

The proposal closely mirrors the operative plan by integrating development intensity with the landform. It locates open space areas for passive recreation around and through the development following natural drainage creases or 'fingers'.

Height restriction lines (Structure Plan B) continue to be applied to respond to sensitivities of the locality around the eastern escarpment. Pedestrian links are required to be provided (Structure Plan C) around and through the site to enable greater interaction with the landscape and recreational amenity values. Development is adequately clear of natural and historic features including the water races, Homestead Gully and the eastern escarpment. The southern development block is setback from its nearest residential neighbours within the Pringles Creek subdivision and the protection of a site for a future community sports field for the Valley along the southern boundary continues to be provided for.

Areas of higher development intensity (high or medium density housing and visitor accommodation) are logically proposed adjacent to the highest order movement routes, around the village core with its planned commercial and hotel uses, and associated with open space i.e. fronting onto the golf course and Activity Area 6 open space corridors. Areas of lower density are a buffer between high and low density residential areas, with the lowest density 'hillside lots' located on the western perimeter to maintain amenity and open space values as the landscape transitions to high-country land. Overall however the proposed planning framework is less rigid in its distribution of housing densities than the operative structure plan, evidenced by the more varied pockets of higher density provided for.

Activity Area 1b is relatively isolated from the village on account of the golf course bisecting it from the other Activity Areas. However, its location is supported from the

point of view of helping establish a more defined and urban entrance to the neighbourhood that can act as a more tangible and memorable gateway or arrival for visitors than arriving in the middle of a golf course or through lower density 'suburban' type sections. Such an outcome will also contribute to passive safety on account of the density of units likely to overlook and relate to the principal entry / egress route.

The Access Road is the key structuring element to development across the site and a key focal point of its future character. Activity Area 1a with its proximity to the Access Road, golf course and alpine outlook, offers an opportunity to define the road on this section, and leverage from passing vehicle and pedestrian movement to establish a lively, mixed use village centre. While it is likely that, operationally, some separation will be preferable between the more publicly accessible commercial activities and the more private facilities associated with the golf course (such as a club house), this is a relatively common type of tension that can be resolved through the resource consent process and consideration of a detailed design.

The operative plan adheres more clearly to some 'typical' urban design preferences than the current proposal in terms of its allocation of density around and radiating away from a village core; north-south road layout that places emphasis on walkability and east-west oriented lots; and its largely continuous road frontage to commonage areas so as to ensure public 'frontage'. In comparison, the new proposal provides a slightly more circuitous road loop, two east-west orientated local distributor streets and deeper blocks which has some potential to result in the creation of some rear lots and pan-handle access arrangements.

One advantage of the proposed structure plan over the operative one is that the village core area (Activity Area 1a), while still relating to the main movement route, is located more centrally within the development area rather than towards its eastern edge. This will allow more of the zone's residents to enjoy a more convenient walk to the services on offer, as well as helping to justify the 'spread' of medium density pockets proposed.

However and overall, the operative structure plan has been organised around a more simpler structuring approach and this is why it is more readily able to reflect those typical urban design outcomes. The introduction of a golf course complicates an otherwise optimum urban structure in the following ways:

- ▶ A golf course includes longer and more linear open spaces that can support higher densities along it in addition to around the village core and along the already proposed landscape 'fingers'. These cumulatively disperse high density opportunities around the site and result in a less rigid but also less coherent layout.
- ▶ A golf course will maximise its amenity if it is as continuous as possible i.e. is severed or criss-crossed by roads to the least possible extent. This in turn lends itself to less, but more strategically placed, roads serving the development.
- ▶ Road frontage along a golf course can be problematic from the point of view of safety from stray balls, and the creation of tall safety nets along road edges can have a variety of adverse visual and landscape effects (as well as limiting informal physical access). In turn the principle of well landscaped development interfacing directly with open space can then apply to parts of the landscape 'fingers' in a way

that provides a legible and continuous edge experience for users that is also a softer and quieter response than road edges as the default treatment.

The most problematic proposed change has been the removal of road edges from some of the open space edges, and a coarser-grained road distribution generally. Road edges are preferred in urban design literature as they concentrate activity and land use orientation to the street and open space, and can bring numerous visual amenity, legibility and passive safety benefits (including in the evening). However, it is accepted that roads along relatively narrow open space fingers is also a characteristically urban solution that is best promoted where there is a general scarcity of open space (and the benefits of pooling the 'net' width of an open space and adjoining road) together can help create larger net separations between development edges).

In this instance, it is proposed (by the Design Guidelines) to require, at the time of resource consent, development outcomes that provide for activation, visual interest, safety and overlooking of the open spaces from development adjacent to them. This could include road frontage, semi-road frontage (such as jointly owned access lots giving private means of vehicle access), or well-managed and screened private boundary interfaces. While this is likely to result in a 'looser' urban structure, this will still be appropriate given the more rural lifestyle that exists in the Valley and Special Zone, the modest overall scale of the new neighbourhood, and in particular the proposal's successful response to topography and landscape values on the site.

Overall the proposal will provide for a generally appropriate and logical urban structure. With reference to the operative plan, no urban design effects of concern will arise that cannot be managed through the consent process subject to the following recommendations.

### Recommendations

- ▶ It is recommended that planning provisions require, for each of the Activity Area 6 'fingers', a lighting solution allowing for safe evening use by pedestrians, if road edges are not proposed. This is envisaged to allow for low intensity, down-cast bollards.
- ▶ Cul-de-sac roads or access ways should be avoided where practicable.
- ▶ Rear lots should be avoided where practicable.
- ▶ Related to the above, the following changes to the guidelines document are recommended:
  - ▶ Removal of cul-de-sac access ways shown on plans throughout the document, and replacement with text confirming that where it is impractical to provide a connected street network, short and direct cul-de-sacs would be appropriate.
  - ▶ On-street car parking should be required along one side of any laneway that serves more than 5 units.

- Any laneway serving more than 5 units should be required to provide a minimum 1.5m wide footpath along one side.
- Where the guidelines discuss a “village green”, this should be changed to a “village green or square”, or just “village square”, and include text emphasising the need for activity that is adjacent to the square (wherever it locates) to activate and well-overlook it.

## **THE PROPOSAL SHOULD ENSURE SAFE AND CONVENIENT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN VEHICULAR, PEDESTRIAN, CYCLE AND BRIDLE TRAIL NETWORKS WITHIN THE SITE AND TO THE WIDER LANDSCAPE**

With reference to the site’s road and block structure, the road pattern of the operative plan reflects the Urbanismplus concept plan which is characteristically ‘urban’. This means that roads are more linear, axial and direct. In comparison to this ‘urban’ approach, the road layout of the proposal is ‘looser’ by nature and focused on a circuitous Access Road. While road-based pedestrian routes are likely more indirect and longer, the proposal’s supporting pedestrian network through commonage areas continues to provide important north-south and east-west linkages through the site, and keep routes short and direct for users. The proposed road network still remains permeable, walkable and easy to navigate.

One characteristic of the proposed plan is that the main access road is less direct than in the operative structure plan on account of bending further south into the development area (to be south of Activity Area 1a). This is in part to reduce the severance of the village core from the golf course and to also allow the village core and any main street-type commercial outcomes to better relate to the residential area. On overall balance, the added inefficiency of a less-direct route will not be problematic and in consideration of the route as a whole from Cardrona Valley Road will add a negligible inconvenience to users.

Under the proposal local access to lots across the site is flexible such that their alignment and placement can be planned in conjunction with land use development. Internal local access routes could take many forms including short roads, rights of way or jointly owned access lanes. As the proposed Structure Plan does not ‘lock in’ the form and location of these local access ways, it is important that assessment matters require that wherever practicable, they form a connected network and enable activation of any adjacent open spaces (this issue has been addressed previously).

The proposed structure plan specifically requires pedestrian linkages to be provided. The location of these is specified on the supporting Structure Plan C map. Overall, a high standard of pedestrian permeability and route choice will be achieved through the provision of footpaths along all roads and the complementary network of pedestrian linkages around and through the site. Comparing the two plans, except for the ‘pedestrian escarpment linkage’ along the development area’s eastern edge, all other pathways and connections to the wider track and trail network as well as the Gin and Raspberry Lane connection to the Village remain. Removal of this escarpment linkage is appropriate given the proximity of golf fairways and tees, and it will not materially diminish pedestrian amenity within the site.

Overall the proposal will provide for an appropriate movement network and routes for all major travel modes. With reference to the operative plan, no urban design effects of concern will arise that cannot be managed through the consent process subject to recommendations made previously.

## **THE PROPOSAL SHOULD PROVIDE AN INTEGRATED SERIES OF OPEN SPACES WITH APPEAL, AMENITY, AND USABILITY**

The settlement has a distinct 'alpine' character given by the landform and location but also the design guidelines that will shape the built form. The zone is surrounded by an abundance of highly connected and useable public open spaces that are, all-year round, visually spectacular.

### *Retention of Activity Area 6 and 7a*

Natural open space experiences are available along the eastern escarpment (Activity Area 7a), along the southern boundary and along the two fingers (Activity Area 6) which penetrate through the development area.

The east-west green fingers link the urban development blocks with the wider natural landscape. As with the operative plan, they form part of the settlement's functional green space network and are important for the maintenance of environmental values as they are aligned to the natural drainage depressions of the site. Activity Area 6 helps contribute to the legibility of urban form of the settlement, softening urban edges and providing useful visual relief to the span of house-lined streets. The proposal logically locates the majority of medium density lots (Activity Area 2a) with frontage and orientation to these green fingers. Commonage areas will serve residents and visitors as a near resource within an easy walk of houses for relaxation and passive recreation.

### *Establishing a village square*

Unlike the operative plan, the proposal does not specify the location of a community facility site such as a neighbourhood park or village green within an area of commonage (named Activity Area 6a on the operative Structure Plan A map). The proposal will however provide an urban public open space within the core commercial and visitor accommodation area. Proposed Activity Area 1a rules require the establishment of a dedicated area of public meeting space (a 'village square') at the time surrounding buildings are approved, an outcome which is strongly supported and will complement the many green spaces already proposed.

Locating a small-scale urban public space in the heart of the mixed-use village centre will provide a focus for community and tourism activity on site, and establish a place to meet, relax, play and enjoy the unique views and aspect relative to the alpine scenery and golf course.

### *Golf course*

The golf course expands the open space network on the site but this is private land not available for community use other than visual amenity. Its design can provide opportunities for native planting and natural irrigation and drainage systems that can become landscape features. It is however likely that many residents within the zone will

become golf club members and be regular users of its grounds. Due to the landscape and landform values of the site, the golf course will remain substantially open (dense shelterbelt type plantings to separate and accentuate fairways will not be possible or appropriate) and residents will be able to enjoy expansive views across and over the golf course.

Overall the proposal will provide for an appropriate open space network and high levels of visual and open space amenity. With reference to the operative plan, no urban design effects of concern will arise that cannot be managed through the consent process.

### **THE PROPOSAL SHOULD PROVIDE FOR A DIVERSE MIX OF COMPATIBLE ACTIVITIES AND USES WHICH MAXIMISE CHOICE AND OPPORTUNITY**

The driver of the changes proposed is the incorporation of a golf course and its associated facilities into the development. This activity is complementary to the existing Special Zone and is likely to bring only social and economic benefits to the new neighbourhood. Of itself it raises no urban design issues of concern.

The proposal will maintain choice in living environments, reflected in the high degree of variation in lot sizes across activity areas and the provision of minimum gross floor areas for residential units enabled by Activity Area (Rule 12.22.4.1(ix)). The various activity areas will create a range of development opportunities including terraced housing, semi-attached, compact detached and large detached houses that in turn will result in a mixture of price points and household types to service different lifestyle needs. More generous lot sizes on the western development interface with the 'heritage' open space area are appropriate given the high amenity condition of this land and will allow a softer external edge to the development.

Continuing the enablement of secondary units on lots within Activity Areas 2 through to 4 also supports housing choice and may attract a broader demographic to the site as well as providing for on-site worker accommodation. Such units can be used as a rental for workers or single households. They could also be occupied initially by a family as it builds a larger unit over time when finance becomes available or for occupation by extended family members in a family-flat arrangement.

Non-residential land uses are concentrated in Activity Area 1a (more than likely provided within or associated with a hotel development). The village centre also enables vertical or horizontal mixed use development in a range of layouts that combines local retail and commercial activities, visitor accommodation and high density 'apartment style' residential uses. These are most appropriately located in Activity Area 1a but are also suitable in Activity Area 1b (commercial activity less-so). Visitor accommodation is also provided for in Activity Areas 2 (as a Controlled Activity) and Activity Area 3 (as a Discretionary Activity), although not within secondary units.

Overall the proposal will provide for an appropriate mix of complementary land use activities within the site. With reference to the operative plan, no urban design effects of concern will arise that cannot be managed through the consent process although it is noted that any commercial development proposed in Activity Area 1b should be subject to a confirmation that there is insufficient ability to accommodate it in Activity Area 1a (as

a discretionary activity this is already possible but a more explicit confirmation of this key locational consideration is recommended).

## **THE PROPOSAL SHOULD STRENGTHEN ALPINE VILLAGE CHARACTER BY CREATING DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL RESPONSES, LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSOLIDATED COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AROUND A VILLAGE CENTRE**

### *Activity Area 1a - Village centre*

The MCSL golf course proposal will expand the tourism-related appeal of the zone, particularly during milder months, and recognises the appeal of golf is more than a pure drive-to recreational function. It looks to capitalise on the site's unique alpine village setting and the growing market for unique golf-based tourism experiences (including short-stay accommodation). It is also recognised that through developments including Millbrook and Jack's Point (and outside the district such as Clearwater in Christchurch), the incorporation of golf amenity into residential development areas can be very successful.

The golf course, hotel and short-stay accommodation functions are considered highly complementary, appealing to a variety of visitor groups. It is possible that the combination of ski field access and a golf course will of itself attract visitors otherwise disinclined to come (i.e. a cumulative inducement). As such, these activities will enable direct and indirect local employment and income benefits for the new neighbourhood. Concentrating commercial functions associated with these uses (such as pro shop / equipment rental store, day spa, café, restaurant, licensed premises and other convenience retail activities) within the village centre area (Activity Area 1a) will help the village centre develop as a viable and vibrant activity node. These activities will not only act as destinations in their own right, but will also meet the local convenience needs of residents. Due to its location at the key road intersection within the zone, Activity Area 1a is likely to receive the highest intensity of traffic movement and possible consumer capture across the site. It is directly accessible from the main spine road, and overlooks the first tee and final green.

The Baxter Design Ltd concept master plan indicates a hotel building as a landmark that opens to the north fronting the golf course's final fairway and green. This is supported by the proposed Structure Plan, which requires a landmark building (up to 24m in height) in the village centre. The proposal also duplicates current assessment matters that mandate all built form in Area 1a contributes to a sense of urban intensity, enclosure and activation of public spaces. Of note are matters that relate to the provision of a landmark building, and consideration of elements that encourage casual surveillance and activity such as glazing and articulation.

In this regard, the following additional design requirements are recommended at 12.22.5(ii) to strengthen existing provisions as they relate to how development interfaces with the public realm:

- Buildings and landscaping should be designed to provide for passive surveillance over and activation of the village square and commonage areas.

- ▶ A primary entry point of any relevant building in Activity Area 1a should be oriented towards the village square.
- ▶ Blank walls should be minimised and ground floor elevations should be designed with unobstructed views to the village square from major and minor openings.
- ▶ Views to trees and greens should be considered in the design of any building in Activity Area 1a.
- ▶ Buildings should incorporate landmark design elements that demonstrate innovative architectural design and/or articulation in the use of materials and treatments.
- ▶ Buildings should be responsive to micro-climatic conditions and incorporate appropriate design measures that provide protection from the weather in a safe and attractive manner.

#### *Activity Area 1b*

Activity Area 1b is primarily for higher density residential and visitor accommodation activities. Its relatively stand-alone location at the zone entry would lend itself in particular to a comprehensively designed visitor accommodation activity. It also enables commercial activities to establish, as a discretionary activity (this is supported so as to reinforce the primacy of Activity Area 1a). Activity Area 1b is located in the arrival area of the site, has good accessibility and visibility from the Access Road and, under a long-term scenario, could feasibly support commercial uses such as professional, commercial or administrative offices or a local restaurant.

The zoning intent to allow for commercial activities within Area 1b remains broadly supported from an urban design perspective. It provides future development flexibility should economic demand for commercial activities across the site prove higher than anticipated or otherwise able to be accommodated in the core. However, given the location of Activity Area 1b is no longer abutting the village centre, protecting the vibrancy, cohesion and activity mix within the core (Area 1a) remains critical.

Continuation of an assessment-based approach rather than a predetermined commercial activity cap or threshold is supported.

#### *Remainder of development*

The remainder of the development will consist of well-landscaped commonage areas, and private development, predominantly private residential dwellings in detached or semi-detached configurations. For these developments, built form quality and alpine character will be managed through the use of design requirements (including subdivision), and the design guidelines previously developed for the Special Zone. This will ensure that a consistent and appropriate architectural response is achieved.

Overall the proposal will include methods that will ensure a suitable built form quality including a distinctive village character will be achieved. With reference to the operative plan, no urban design effects of concern will arise that cannot be managed through the consent process other than as recommended above.

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## 7. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been made in this report relating to the plan provisions:

- ▶ It is recommended that planning provisions require, for each of the Activity Area 6 'fingers', a lighting solution allowing for safe evening use by pedestrians, if road edges are not proposed. This is envisaged to allow for low intensity, down-cast bollards.
- ▶ Cul-de-sac roads or access ways should be avoided where practicable.
- ▶ Rear lots should be avoided where practicable.
- ▶ Commercial development in Activity Area 1b should occur only where it can be demonstrated that there is more commercial demand than can be accommodated in Activity Area 1a.
- ▶ Buildings and landscaping should be designed to provide for passive surveillance over and activation of the village square and commonage areas.
- ▶ A primary entry point of any building in Activity Area 1a that is adjacent to the village square should be oriented towards the village square.
- ▶ Blank walls should be minimised and ground floor elevations should be designed with unobstructed views to the village square from major and minor openings.
- ▶ Views to trees and greens should be considered in the design of any building in Activity Area 1a.
- ▶ Buildings should incorporate landmark design elements that demonstrate innovative architectural design and/or articulation in the use of materials and treatments.
- ▶ Buildings should be responsive to micro-climatic conditions and incorporate appropriate design measures that provide protection from the weather in a safe and attractive manner.

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## 8. CONCLUSIONS

This report has documented the findings of an urban design assessment of a private plan change request made by MCSL for the development of an integrated community within a

village environment with a range of activities including residential, visitor accommodation, commercial, community and golf course activities.

The key conclusions of this report are that:

- ▶ The proposal is in line with the operative Special Zone objectives and policies and in particular, rules and assessment matters will give rise to quality design outcomes which create a successful and distinctive settlement with an alpine character.
- ▶ The proposed road and block pattern is likely to result in a less rigid 'urban' network than the operative structure plan, which is less preferable in pure urban design terms but nonetheless still fitting for the rural setting and landscape attributes of the site.
- ▶ Building masses and densities are appropriately located relative to visual and landscape sensitivities, the site's topography and historic heritage.
- ▶ The proposal achieves a density and likely residential yield that is consistent with what has been enabled for the Special Zone and will more than likely result in a similar overall scale of activity on the site.
- ▶ The concentration of commercial and visitor accommodation activities will help the village centre develop as a viable and vibrant node for both local community and visitor use.
- ▶ The provision of a village square within the village centre will offer opportunities for formal and informal social interaction.
- ▶ The proposal achieves all relevant urban design considerations relating to walkability and opportunity for longer term / wider integration with the trail network as the settlement grows in future stages.

Overall, the proposed changes to the Operative Special Zone are supported and will not give rise to urban design effects that are problematic or which otherwise cannot be suitably managed through the consent framework. The inclusion of a golf course is specifically supported and will help give a more sustainable economic foundation to the village.

The Private Plan Change request should be accepted from an urban design perspective on the basis that the recommendations made in this report are incorporated.