

**IN THE MATTER OF**

The Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

The Hearing Stream 13 -  
Queenstown Mapping  
Annotations and  
Rezoning Requests

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

Submission #790 – Kerry Drive - Queenstown Lakes  
District Council

**EVIDENCE OF**

**Stephen Skelton**  
Landscape Architect  
BCom, MLA (Hons), NZILA (Registered)

**ON BEHALF OF**

Queenstown Lakes District Council

**DATE**

9 June 2017

## INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Stephen Russell Skelton. I have the qualifications of a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Northern Arizona University and a Masters of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University. I am the Director of Patch Limited (**Patch**), a landscape architecture and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown. I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and am the acting chairman of the Southern Branch.
2. I have been involved in landscape consultancy work in the Queenstown Lakes District area for over 4 years, working in both the public and private sector. I held the position of landscape planner with Lakes Environmental before it was absorbed by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**) in 2013. I then held the position of landscape architect at a private practice based in Queenstown before opening my own practice in June 2016. My work includes all facets of landscape architecture and landscape planning through the range of small and large scale projects. Over the last year, my work at Patch has included master planning, commercial and residential design, preparation of native restoration planting plans, preparation of landscape management plans, preparation of landscape assessments for resource consent applications and the preparation and presentation of evidence for Council and District Plan Review Hearings.
3. I am professionally familiar with the values of the rural, rural living and urban landscapes in the Queenstown Lakes District. I understand the Strategic Direction of the Proposed District Plan and the Objectives and Policies, especially those contained with the Rural and Landscape chapters.
4. I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. This evidence has been prepared in accordance with it and I agree to comply with it. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

## SUBMISSION 790 – KERRY DRIVE

5. The subject site is a portion of land at the mid to upper, northern edge of the Queenstown Hill residential area (**Attachment A**). It is an irregular shaped parcel of land proposed to be partly zoned Rural and partly zoned Low Density Residential (LDR). It is a steep, 4,282m<sup>2</sup> site with mature exotic trees. A pedestrian trail passes through the site linking Malaghan Street with Kerry Drive. This trail is mostly within the LDR portion of the site.

6. The submitter seeks rezone all the site to LDR. This would also require the shifting of the Queenstown Urban Growth Boundary UGB and the Outstanding Natural Landscape category boundary to the north. It is understood that the land is part of a public reserve.
7. Council's consultant landscape architect Dr Marion Read has opposed the submission as she considers that the walkway contributes significantly to the amenity of pedestrian.

## ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY

### *Effects on the Urban Environment*

8. I have reviewed the PDP Objectives and Policies contained within Chapter 4 – Urban Development. The landscape matters contained within this chapter generally concern the effects of urban development on the natural environment, rural amenity and landscape values. These objectives and policies seek to achieve a sensitive transition to rural areas, to provide for development which enhances public access to reserves and open spaces and to protect valued landscape features.
9. I consider that the subject site makes a very small contribution to the natural backdrop of Queenstown as viewed from a distance (**Attachment B**). The site's character is more directly experienced from the trail which passes through the site. It is important to note that this trail passes through the already zoned LDR part of the site linking two residential roads.
10. Council's Planner Rosalind Devlin states that there may be opportunity to provide 'replacement' amenity values should the subject site be developed<sup>1</sup>. I understand that as part of likely future public consultation to change the reserves status of the site, there is opportunity to maintain a public pedestrian right of way through the site. Furthermore, I consider that walkers seeking a more natural experience and wishing to gain the Queenstown Trail on the lower elevations may seek to establish access to the adjacent DOC managed reserve to the north of the site. This would allow for the establishment of an alternative access to the Queenstown Hill Track which would bring the threshold of natural experience lower on the Hill and present an opportunity for the public to better access another part of the reserve (**Attachment C**).

### *Effects on Rural Character and the Outstanding Natural Landscape*

11. I have reviewed the PDP Objectives and Policies contained within Chapter 6 – Landscapes and Chapter 21 – Rural. As the extension of the LDR to the edge of the site's cadastral boundaries will occur on an

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 19.10, Evidence of Rosalind Devlin 24 May 2017

ONL, I have considered the effects of this submission in the frame of the ONL Assessment Matters contained within part 21.7.1 of the PDP.

12. There is insignificant indigenous vegetation on the site and the vegetation which does exist is predominantly exotic. I consider that the more natural character of the Rural zoned portions of the site is insignificant in the scale of the wider context of Queenstown Hill. The site provides an insignificant contribution to the legibility of the landscape. The visual amenity provided by Queenstown Hill will continue to be dominant and natural in character and the extension of the zoning will not result in adverse effect on the visual amenity.
13. I consider that the zone extension will represent a very small increase in urban character and will not lead to adverse cumulative effects which will further degrade the landscape quality, character or visual amenity values.

## CONCLUSION

14. Submission 790 seeks to rezone the northern balance of the site which is 1,943m<sup>2</sup> in area from Rural to LDR. There is currently a Reserve designation over the site and the removal of this status would be subject to future public consultation.
15. I consider that in granting this relief the urban and rural character of Queenstown Hill and the visual amenity the Hill provides will experience a negligible adverse effect. I also consider that through future consultation there is opportunity to enhance the walkway network which links the township to the ONL of Queenstown Hill. This would have the positive effect of bring forward (lower) the natural experience provided by the reserve.

Stephen Skelton



Landscape Architect

June 9, 2017



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Image 1: A composite of 5 photographs taken with a 50mm lense on June 1 2017 at 2:22pm. Viewing Distance 500mm.



