

MOUNT SOHO TRUST

**APPLICATION FOR REFERRAL PURSUANT TO THE COVID-19 RECOVERY
(FAST-TRACK CONSENTING) ACT**

REPORT ON LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

vivian+espie

23rd August 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Mount Soho Trust (**the applicant**) proposes a subdivision to provide for urban/suburban residential land use on a 18ha property (**the site**) adjoining McDonnell Road and Centennial Avenue to the immediate south of the existing suburban area of Arrowtown. This report accompanies an application for referral pursuant to the Covid-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 (**the application**) and discusses the potential effects of the proposal in relation to landscape character and visual amenity.
- 1.2 The design, layout and details of the proposal are set out in material that forms part of the application including a number of plans. I do not repeat that detail in this report but I have examined and considered it. Reference to the plans and information of the application will be useful when reading this report.
- 1.3 I have visited and walked over the site numerous times and have also viewed the site from many surrounding locations. I am very familiar with the landscapes of the Wakatipu Basin and the Queenstown Lakes District as a whole, having been involved in landscape planning and assessment work here for over twenty years.
- 1.4 This report gives high-level assessment conclusions in relation to landscape character and visual amenity and the associated potential effects of the proposal. I understand that a more detailed assessment that comments on the specifics of the proposal would accompany a resource consent application if the proposal becomes a referred project.

2. GUIDANCE FROM THE DISTRICT PLAN AND PREVIOUS LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS WORK

- 2.1 Pursuant to the Queenstown Lakes Operative District Plan (**ODP**), the site is zoned Arrowtown South Special Zone (**ASSZ**) which provides for rural living development pursuant to a Structure Plan (as per Attachment 1 to this report). The review of the ODP that began in 2014 has resulted in a Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) that was notified in 2015. The review has not included the ASSZ and hence the ODP zoning remains unchanged and operative.

- 2.2** The ODP stipulates that the floor of the Wakatipu Basin (which includes the site) is not part of any Outstanding Natural Landscape and this is echoed in the PDP.

The Arrowtown South Special Zone

- 2.3** The purpose of the ASSZ *“is to enable a comprehensively planned residential living environment, that:*

- *clearly defines the southern edge of the township*
- *provides connection between Centennial Ave and McDonnell Road*
- *ensures protection of the escarpment and watercourse and creates a network of walking trails*
- *maintains a predominantly low density residential character*
- *provides consistent landscape treatment of open space areas*

This is achieved by adopting a Structure Plan that defines three different Activity Areas with particular rules and standards”¹.

- 2.4** The Objectives of the ASSZ are:

- 1 To provide for a range of residential and rural living activities in a way and at a rate that ensures a comprehensive and sustainable pattern of development is achieved.*
- 2 To manage and enhance the biodiversity values, physical features, landscape and amenity values of the Zone².*

- 2.5** The Policies that sit under these Objectives reinforce the purpose of the zone as described above. Particularly, they note that a Structure Plan sets out areas for open space treatment over important parts of the site and that these areas are managed comprehensively to maintain and enhance biodiversity and natural values. The Policies also note that the parts of the site that are not open space should be developed to rural living densities rather than residential densities.

¹ Operative District Plan, provision 12.32.1.

² Ibid, 12.31.4.

Subsequent landscape assessment and analysis

- 2.6** In late 2016, the QLDC began work on a variation to the PDP in relation to the Wakatipu Basin. The QLDC commissioned and received the Wakatipu Basin Land Use Planning Study (**WBLUPS**) to give guidance regarding a suitable zoning regime for the Wakatipu Basin based on a study of the landscape character and visual amenity of the basin. On the basis of the findings of the WBLUPS, the QLDC formulated a Variation relating to the Wakatipu Basin that was notified under Stage 2 of the PDP in November 2017. The WBLUPS identifies 25 Landscape Character Units (**LCUs**) within the basin and sets out an assessment of the basin as a whole and also of each LCU.
- 2.7** In the WBLUPS, the site is within LCU 24 “South Arrowtown”. Appendix H of the WBLUPS is a set of worksheets that give descriptions and assessment findings in relation to each LCU. The part of Appendix H that relates to LCU 24 is appended to this report as Attachment 2.
- 2.8** The last few rows of the relevant part of the WBLUPS’s Appendix H (Attachment 2 to this report) suggest potential ways in which LCU 24 could be appropriately managed in relation to landscape planning issues, as follows:

Potential landscape opportunities and benefits associated with additional development:

Golf course landscape potentially suited to accommodating a reasonably high level of development (e.g. Millbrook).

Close proximity to Arrowtown.

Close proximity to urban infrastructure.

Large-scaled lots suggest potential for subdivision.

Urbanising effects of the approved Queenstown Country Club SHA suggest a tolerance for (sensitive) urban development.

Potential for integration of walkways/cycleways.

Riparian restoration potential.

Easy topography.

Environmental characteristics and amenity values to be maintained and enhanced:

Views from McDonnell Road and Centennial Avenue to the surrounding mountain/river context.

Reinforcing/ re-establishing a robust and defensible edge to Arrowtown.

Capability to absorb additional development:

High.

Recommended landscape planning strategies:

For rural residential development or large lot urban development:

Assessment criteria to address building height, building colours/materiality, building coverage, accessory buildings, domestic infrastructure, external lighting, fencing/gates, framework planting to integrate buildings, views from public places and neighbouring dwellings to the surrounding mountain context and vegetation retention to maintain a parkland character.

Encouraging a comprehensive development plan approach to achieve a coordinated and cohesive development outcome.

Retention of covenanted vegetation features.

Coordination of landscape treatment along Centennial Avenue and McDonnell Road to maintain and frame key viewshafts to the mountains to the north and east.

Integration of a robust defensible edge along the southern edge of the unit including a 100m width 'no building' area.

For Medium Density or Low Density urban development:

Requirement for a Structure Plan process to achieve a coordinated and cohesive development outcome with a clearly legible and robust defensible edge at the southern end of unit and consideration of views from public places and neighbouring dwellings to the surrounding mountain context.

2.9 Following its discussion on the many LCUs of the Wakatipu Basin, the WBLUPS concludes that:

Lastly, for three locations within the Basin, it is recommended that a more urban development approach is explored (at least in part of the unit) i.e. 10 Ladies Mile, 23 Millbrook and 24 South Arrowtown.

... It is recommended that there is the requirement for a Structure Plan process to achieve a coordinated and cohesive development outcome with clearly legible and robust defensible edges (i.e. 10 Ladies Mile, 24 South Arrowtown).

... For each of these three 'urban' areas it is recommended that a nuanced development approach is encouraged as opposed to the more traditional urban pattern associated with areas such as Lake Hayes

Estate or Shotover Country. Up-zoning of each of these areas could result in a built form of development similar to that associated with Millbrook i.e. an urban parkland within which higher density is enabled in places with lower densities and landscape buffers elsewhere, as the site-specific circumstances dictate.

The Recommended Zoning strategy can be summarised as follows:

An Arrowsmith Precinct (AP) which may also achieve a density of development at the same level as the PDP's Low or Medium Density Residential zones, requires the integration of a clearly defensible urban edge, and assumes an 'urban parkland' type development character. The AP trumps the underlying WBRAZ provisions.

Additional urban scale development is considered appropriate in two new precincts: the Ladies Mile Gateway Precinct (LMGP) and the Arrowsmith Precinct (AP).

Similar options to the LMGP apply to the AP area. The precinct will enable residential growth through provision of a range of housing opportunities in an area close to the main Arrowsmith centre. New provisions need to be formulated that provide for and enable a mix of building forms and housing options. Integrated Residential Developments should be fostered by the provisions (as for LMGP). A structure planning type process is needed to develop suitable roading layouts, address landscape and amenity issues, staging and infrastructure, land ownership nuances and explore how to best stimulate development uptake.

A precinct overlay should be applied to Arrowsmith and Ladies Mile to give certainty as to their suitability for future urban development. The application of urban zoning (and the applicability or not of Urban Growth Limits) will require a more fine-grained consideration of matters which can only be progressed through a structure plan process (only if the SHAs at Ladies Mile Highway and south of Arrowsmith are developed).

The precinct provisions should indicate that those areas should be zoned medium density or low density residential or a mix of the two (noting we consider achieving a higher yield is preferable given growth projections) with the requirement for development in the area to be structure planned to achieve an integrated development outcome that addresses matters such as amenity, landscape, infrastructure and roading. (For example, the establishment of robust defensible edges at Arrowsmith and a 75m building setback at Ladies Mile.)³

- 2.10** The extent of the Arrowsmith Precinct that the WBLUPS recommends is shown in Figure 1 below. It takes in the entirety of LCU 24.

³ Wakatipu Basin Land Use Planning Study, prepared for QLDC by Barry Kaye Associates, Bridget Gilbert Landscape Architecture and Strategease, March 2017, paragraphs 6.15 to 6.18, 7.2 to 7.5, 8.4 to 8.6 and 8.39 to 8.40.



Figure 1: The Arrowtown Precinct (blue dotted area) as recommended by the WBLUPS, paragraph 8.6. (Red outline added indicating the extent of the subject site).

- 2.11 Since the time of the WBLUPS, the QLDC has proceeded with a structure planning exercise for the Ladies Mile area but has not proceeded with one for the Arrowtown South area. I understand that this is because of resourcing and capacity issues.
- 2.12 Notwithstanding that no structure planning exercise has been done for the Arrowtown South area, subsequent to the WBLUPS, the QLDC have changed the zoning of the Tewa Banks site (on the southern side of Jopp Street, within LCU 24, as shown on Attachment 3 to this report) from Rural Zone to Lower Density Suburban Residential Zone, have altered the Urban Growth Boundary so as to include the Tewa Banks site and have granted consent for residential subdivision, creating 68 residential lots.

3. THE PROPOSAL IN RELATION TO LANDSCAPE ISSUES

- 3.1 The current proposal is shown on Attachment 4. It seeks urban/suburban development over part of the subject site, being a southern extension to the existing suburban area of Arrowtown. It also proposes areas of open space.

- 3.2** As is explained in the application, the proposed residential development within the site has been configured to spatially accord with the existing Structure Plan of the operative ASSZ, but to increase density from a rural living density to an urban/suburban density. The areas that are to be open space under the ASSZ will very largely remain as open space under the proposed situation. The layout of the proposed development (as shown on Attachment 4) ensures that the most sensitive parts of the site remain as undeveloped (and enhanced) open space. The design controls that relate to future buildings add additional mitigation of potential effects.
- 3.3** Provisions of the ASSZ require particular treatment of the open space areas of the site such that comprehensive vegetative management is achieved which controls/eradicates weeds, controls animal pests, brings about ecological restoration of open space areas and sets out walkway alignments⁴. The current proposal adopts these goals and stipulates that the details of open space management shall be set out in order to ensure that these goals are achieved over the open space parts of the site.
- 3.4** As is set out in detail in the application, it is also relevant that the current proposal includes a set of design controls that are specific to the subject site. The design controls have been formulated to bring about a pattern of built form that responds to the topographical character of the site and the character of Arrowtown itself; also to ensure high amenity for future occupiers, to enable a range of housing typologies and to accord with the Arrowtown Design Guidelines.
- 3.5** With reference to the recommendations of the WBLUS set out in the previous section of this report, the current proposal does not set out a structure plan or a master-plan for the entire Arrowtown South area; to do so would require designing and laying out land uses / activity areas or zones over land that is not owned or controlled by the applicant. However, the applicant has taken heed of the recommendations of the WBLUPS and a key driver of the design of the proposed development configuration has been to create a layout of residential development within the subject site that does not stymie a future master-planning or structure planning exercise for the entire Arrow South (LUC 24) area.
- 3.6** As will be expanded upon, we consider that the current proposal has been designed in a way that can appropriately tie in to a bigger picture, being an appropriate master-planned / structure

⁴ Operative District Plan provision 12.32.3.2(i) and (ii).

planned layout for the Arrowtown South area (i.e. LCU 24). A master-planned or structure planned layout for this area would be likely to include some urban/suburban land use (such as on the Tewa Banks site and parts of the subject site), some golf-course land use, the existing Arrowtown Lifestyle Retirement Village, some Lifestyle Precinct areas (there are already two such areas on the west side of McDonnell Road that have been created via settled appeals on the PDP), and some open space areas.

4. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VALUES

- 4.1** The WBLUPS was commissioned to assess and report on the landscape character and values of the Wakatipu Basin and how these should best be managed. As has been discussed, in order to achieve this goal, the basin was divided into 25 LCUs and each was examined in detail. Ultimately, the WBLUPS found that many of these LCUs had a very low, low or moderate-low capability to absorb development and that in order to maintain the landscape character and values of the Wakatipu Basin overall, development in those LCUs needs to be strongly discouraged.
- 4.2** As has been set out above, the WBLUPS found that LCU 24 has a “*high capability to absorb additional development*”, and that for this unit “*it is recommended that a more urban development approach is explored (at least in part of the unit)*”⁵.
- 4.3** We agree that the approach recommended by the WBLUPS is appropriate; that suitably designed urban or suburban development can be accommodated within the Arrowtown South area (and more specifically within the subject site) without endangering the landscape character and values of the Wakatipu Basin. This is primarily because:
- In relation to existing land use in the Arrowtown South area, “*golf course, rural residential (Arrowtown South Structure Plan) and retirement village (Arrowtown Lifestyle Retirement Village SHA) uses dominate*”⁶. In this regard, the Arrow South Area is different to the majority of the Wakatipu Basin in which a pastoral character, or at least an open-space rural character, dominates (as is borne out by the findings of the WBLUPS). Since the time of the WBLUPS,

⁵ Ibid, Appendix H and

⁶ Ibid, Appendix H.

the Arrowtown Lifestyle Retirement Village that has now been developed and sits as an area of urban density approximately 200m to the south of the subject site. The proposed development would sit between the retirement village and the suburban area of Arrowtown, thereby having logic in terms of spatial patterning.

- Existing zoning over the relevant land already allows for rural living development. Even in the absence of the current proposal, the site will change significantly from its current state.
- Again, in contrast to the vast majority of LCUs that make up the Wakatipu Basin, LCU 24 (Arrowtown South) has a:

“limited perception of coherence as a consequence of the varying landform and vegetation patterns and the somewhat anomalous urban character of development associated with the approved SHA located at some distance from the legible village edge (i.e. the escarpment)”

and

“The unit displays a low level of naturalness as a consequence of the level of existing and anticipated built development together with the golf course patterning”.

- 4.4** In summary, we agree with the WBLUPS that because of the unique characteristics of the Arrowtown South area when compared to the Wakatipu Basin generally, and because of the configuration of the proposed development that accords with the spatial layout of the existing ASSZ Structure Plan, the site can absorb an increase in residential density from a rural living density to an urban/suburban density without compromising the landscape character and values of the Wakatipu Basin.

5. VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY

- 5.1** As set out above, the current proposal is logical and appropriate in relation to landscape character and values. However, that is not to say that it will be visually hidden or undiscernible. The site, and development on it, is visible from:

- Part of Centennial Ave to the immediate east of the site;

- Part of McDonnell Rd to the immediate west of the site;
- Some distant elevated viewpoints such as Tobin's Track and part of the Crown Range Road;
- Neighbouring land:
 - to the north, being part of the existing Arrowtown suburbs;
 - to the east, being part of Arrowtown golf course;
 - to the south, being a number of residential properties between Centennial Ave and McDonnell Rd, and part of Arrowtown golf course;
 - to the west, being part of The Hills golf course.

5.2 When considering the effects of a proposed activity on views and visual amenity, it is important to bear in mind that visibility in itself is not an effect; visual effects are:

"effects on landscape values as experienced in views. ... A proposal that is in keeping with the landscape values, for example, may have no adverse visual effects even if the proposal is a notable change to the view. Conversely, a proposal that is completely out of place with landscape values may have adverse effects even if only occupying a portion of the view"⁷.

5.3 Therefore, as well as considering the degree of visibility of a proposed activity, it is critical to consider whether the proposed new visible element in the landscape is in keeping with existing and expected landscape values, or at odds with those values. As has been set out above, we consider that the proposed activities will uphold existing landscape values rather than be at odds with them. Consideration of the proposed layout of activities is important in this regard (as per Attachment 1 to this report), and also consideration of the specific design controls that are proposed, as these will be determinative in relation to the visual pattern that develops as the site is built out. Notwithstanding our consideration that existing landscape values are upheld, at a

⁷ Te Tangi A Te Manu, Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, April 2021, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architecture, paragraphs 6.25 and 6.27.

fine-scaled level, there are likely to be some effects on particular views and visual amenity. We expect that such issues would be relevant in a future resource consent process if the proposal becomes a referred project. We give discussion on these effects in subsequent paragraphs.

Centennial Avenue

- 5.4** When entering Arrowtown via Centennial Avenue, currently an observer passes from the rural Wakatipu Basin landscape into the Arrowtown Golf Course. The golf course is apparent on both sides of the road for some 800 metres until a well-treed cluster of residential properties is encountered on the western side of the road (as shown on Attachment 3). From this point, the golf course continues on the eastern side of the road for some 650 metres to the start of the suburban pattern of Arrowtown, while on the western side of the road, after the cluster of existing residential properties is passed, the eastern part of the subject site reads as an area of pasture. An observer passing this part of the subject site has golf fairways on their eastern side and is also close to the existing edge of Arrowtown's suburbia, either having just left it or being about to enter it.
- 5.5** The existing ASSZ provides for rural living land use over the site such that 10 building platforms are identified in this eastern part of the site, some of which would be plainly visible. A rural living pattern of dwellings, accessory buildings, driveways and tree planting is anticipated.
- 5.6** The current proposal would visibly extend the suburban pattern of Arrowtown southwards such that the area north of the existing cluster of residential properties discussed above would visually be experienced as part of Arrowtown. Therefore, an observer travelling north would pass from the rural Wakatipu Basin landscape into and past the Arrowtown Golf Course, pass the existing cluster of residential dwellings and enter the suburbs of Arrowtown at that point. With reference to Attachment 4, the new suburban properties that front Centennial Avenue would be accessed from the rear (the west) and therefore a comprehensive roadside treatment could be established featuring suitable landscaping, rather than multiple driveways.
- 5.7** To a traveller on Centennial Avenue, the change of the site from rural living to suburban will be evident as an observer passes the site; a stretch of approximately 650m of Centennial Avenue. This change will involve a suitably vegetated road frontage but will read as part of Arrowtown. The new stretch of suburbia will combine with the birch-lined golf course frontage on the eastern

side of the road to create a visually logical pattern that provides a pleasant entry experience into Arrowtown.

McDonnell Road

- 5.8** With reference to Attachment 3, when travelling north towards the subject site on McDonnell Road, an observer passes through rural land in the vicinity of Hogan's Gully Road before encountering the retirement village on the western side of the road and a collection of rural living properties on the east side of the road, immediately south of the subject site.
- 5.9** Once at the subject site's southern boundary, views to the east open out across the site, allowing visibility of the escarpment of the Arrowtown Ridge and clearer views of the residential dwellings of Advance Terrace. On the opposite side of the road, The Hills golf course is evident, although maturing conifers considerably enclose this view. The existing historic Muter Farm Homestead building and associated outbuildings form a treed cluster within the subject site. As one travels alongside the subject site, it reads as open pasture with the unkempt escarpment face being prominent. Dwellings on the ridge are plainly visible.
- 5.10** With reference to Attachment 1, the existing ASSZ provides for rural living land use over the part of the site that adjoins McDonnell Road such that 5 building platforms are identified on the flats near the road, in addition to the existing homestead buildings. Existing resource consent RM200620 provides for the restoration of one of the homestead buildings (a stone woolshed) for use as a commercial wedding venue. The ASSZ also identifies two building platforms on the ridge at the top of the escarpment and more platforms in the central part of the site that would also be visible from McDonnell Road.
- 5.11** The current proposal would increase the density of the ASSZ rural living activity such that pods of suburban-density residential activity would be plainly evident. With reference to Attachment 4, the area of suburban activity will be visually softened by trees, will be well set back from the road and will not be continuous; it will be separated by large areas of open pastoral space. Incremental native revegetation of the escarpment face and the watercourse that runs through the site will become visible over time. A more continuous, but low-density, line of residential buildings will be evident at the top of the escarpment, running south to the natural termination of this Arrowtown Ridge landform. The future buildings within the site that form the southern end of this escarpment-top line of dwellings will be subject to a lower height control and will be at a lower density than

elsewhere. The experience of passing the site will become one of a transitional experience, of passing clustered suburban activity and areas of open space while approaching the existing suburban area that immediately fronts McDonnell Road.

- 5.12** As described in relation to Centennial Avenue, the change of the site from rural living to suburban will be evident as an observer passes the site; a stretch of approximately 570m of McDonnell Road. This change will involve residential activity being well set back from McDonnell Road and the maintenance of the prominent escarpment as open space to be revegetated in native species. Again, given the existing ASSZ and the context of the site that has been set out previously, the visual change that the current proposal will bring will not be at odds with the character that would otherwise eventuate.

Distant elevated viewpoints

- 5.13** With reference to Attachment 3, observers of the landscape on Tobin's Track are considerably elevated and gain long and broad views of the Wakatipu Basin; a vast 180° panorama is displayed to the west of the viewer. A large proportion of the floor of the Wakatipu Basin is visible and the surfaces of both Lake Hayes and Lake Wakatipu can be seen. The skyline is formed by high, distant mountain peaks. Arrowtown is displayed below the viewer and is certainly a visual point of interest but it still forms a relatively minor part of the overall dramatic vista.
- 5.14** In these views, the site can be seen as an area of open pasture. If the existing ASSZ was developed, the site would appear occupied with parts of numerous building and access-ways visible, however, the site would remain a very small part of a broad scene. If the current proposal proceeds, denser development would be evident on the site but still broken by open space; it would appear as something of a broken or feathered edge to the suburban area of Arrowtown; less geometric than the current suburban edges, and would be visually surrounded by golf courses. In any event, the development pattern that occurs over the subject site will be a very small part of views available from Tobin's Track. To many viewers that take in this scene, the pattern of development enabled by the current proposal will go unnoticed; it will not be in any way eye-catching, striking or visually unexpected.
- 5.15** The nature of views that are available from the Crown Range Road zigzag are somewhat similar to those available from Tobin's Track. They are panoramic views over the Wakatipu Basin. As

one descends the zigzag, views become less elevated and less bird's-eye-like in nature. Nonetheless, these views take in a broad, complex landscape scene of which Arrowtown is a minor element that is at least 2.5 kilometres from the viewer. Arrowtown and the subject site are very difficult to see from the public lookout at the top of the Crown Range Road zigzag. The zigzag below this lookout is a particularly tortuous stretch of road. In an overall sense, the change to this view that the current proposal would bring would be particularly difficult to notice for most viewers.

Neighbouring land

- 5.16** To the north of the subject site, the Arrowtown suburbs currently stop at an abrupt geometric line, as can be seen on Attachment 3. The southern edge of the existing suburban area adjacent to Centennial Avenue is marked with a high, trimmed Hawthorne hedge that largely excludes views into the subject site. This hedge continues to the west, such that the existing properties of Advance Terrace also have views to the subject site very largely excluded. Similar hedging (possibly Hornbeam) marks the southern edges of 104 and 106 Centennial Avenue, such that their views are also limited. For all of these northern neighbours, there is likely to be some minor visibility towards the parts of the subject site that are proposed to become suburban development. Under the existing situation, these parts of the site would become rural living development. Given the outlook of these properties, which is not directed towards the subject site, and the significant screening of the site by hedgerows, we do not consider that visual amenity will be adversely affected to a significant degree.
- 5.17** To the east and west of the subject site lie the Arrowtown golf course and The Hills golf course. The 7th and 8th fairways of the Arrowtown course sit across Centennial Avenue from the subject site. Under the existing situation, users of these two fairways would see some rural living activity on the far side of the road. Under the existing situation, these golfers would be able to see considerably more built form on the far side of the road, being an urban/suburban pattern. The residential land use would still be considerably separated from the golf fairways, particularly by Centennial Avenue. As mentioned, the Centennial Avenue frontage of the site under the proposed situation would not involve multiple driveways and is envisaged to be comprehensively treated in terms of landscape design. It is not unusual for golf fairways to adjoin suburban areas; other fairways of the Arrowtown course immediately adjoin the consented Tewa Banks residential

site. We consider that users of these two fairways will be minimally affected; the amenity that they enjoy will remain very largely undegraded.

- 5.18** The Hills golf course sits opposite the subject site on McDonnell Road. The southern half of The Hills frontage that faces the subject site is lined with a conifer shelterbelt that excludes views. The northern half of the frontage is lined with scattered evergreen and deciduous trees that filter views. These parts of The Hills golf course that front McDonnell Road are not part of the golf course itself; they comprise a turf farm area and open pasture, the closest fairway being approximately 250 metres from the subject site over rolling topography. Apart from their experience of using McDonnell Road (as described above), we consider that users of The Hills golf course will be unaffected by the current proposal.
- 5.19** To the south of the subject site, two existing rural living properties adjoin the site, being 217 McDonnell Road and 150 Centennial Avenue. 217 McDonnell Road has an existing house that was consented via resource consent RM171372. That consent requires dense tree planting to be done on the northern boundary of 217 McDonnell Road, such that views to the subject site would be considerably screened and amenity will be minimally affected.
- 5.20** 150 Centennial Avenue contains an existing dwelling and an approved residential building platform. This property sits to the immediate south of the subject site. I understand that the applicant is in discussions with the owners in anticipation of gaining written approval from them in relation to the current proposal. Under the existing situation, this property is part of one of the rural living activity areas of the ASSZ and more rural living activity extends north of this property, in the southern part of the subject site. Under the proposed situation, suburban residential density would sit within the subject site to the immediate north of this property. Denser built development would be evident, with a more enclosed experience and less open space. Given the development that is enabled by existing zoning, we consider that the potential effects of the proposal on the amenity as experienced from 150 Centennial Avenue can be considerably mitigated by details of landscape design that would be included at the time of a resource consent application.
- 5.21** Also to the south of the subject site, between the two properties discussed above, sits the 10th fairway and green of the Arrowtown golf course. Considerable trees sit on the southern edge of the subject site in this location. Nonetheless, views from this fairway to the development areas of the subject site would be available and these areas would increase in built density under the current proposal. As has been discussed in relation to fairways 7 and 8 above, a user of this

fairway is quite separated from the subject site. Areas of built development on the site are a small part of the visual scene that is taken in and will be peripheral in relation to visual amenity.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1** The site of the proposed activities is not within an ONL. It is on the floor of the Wakatipu Basin, immediately adjacent to the existing suburbs of Arrowtown and is zoned for rural living land use, subject to a structure plan via the ASSZ. The current proposal seeks to increase the density of residential land use from a rural living density to an urban/suburban density but to substantially accord with the layout of the existing structure plan.
- 6.2** With reference to the Objectives, Policies and purpose of the ASSZ (as discussed in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.5 above), the proposal will accord with the spatial layout that is anticipated and will comprehensively manage the large open space parts of the site so as to bring about ecological enhancement and walking access. Additionally, specific design controls will apply to future built form within the site. The key aspect of the proposal that departs from the intentions of the ASSZ is the density of development within the development Activity Areas. As is set out below and in the body of this report, we consider that this increase in residential density will not significantly compromise landscape or visual amenity values.
- 6.3** The QLDC commissioned and received the Wakatipu Basin Land Use Planning Study (**WBLUPS**) to give guidance regarding a suitable Proposed District Plan zoning regime for the Wakatipu Basin based on a study of the landscape character and visual amenity of the basin. The WBLUPS recommended that the landscape unit within which the site sits (South Arrowtown LCU24) is zoned to accommodate urban development subject to a structure planning approach. This was also the recommendation in relation to another landscape unit within the Wakatipu Basin (Ladies Mile LCU10). The QLDC has advanced a structure planning process for Ladies Mile but, as yet, has not done so for South Arrowtown.
- 6.4** The proposal's adherence to the spatial layout of the existing zoning's structure plan means that important open space within the subject site will remain protected (and enhanced) and that the layout of development can appropriately tie into a future structure planning exercise that would cover the entire South Arrowtown unit. Residential development that would result from the

proposal would be separated by areas of internal open space and would have its edges very considerably formed by golf courses. In addition to the golf course land use and the urban/suburban land use within the subject site, the Tewa Banks site and the Arrowtown Lifestyle Retirement Village, a future structure-planning exercise may create other areas of rural living land use and well as retaining areas of open space.

- 6.5** We agree with the WBLUPS that the Arrowtown South area is an unusual part of the Wakatipu Basin in that its landscape character is dominated by golf course, rural living and retirement village activity, rather than by pastoral rural activity, as is the case throughout most of the Wakatipu Basin. We therefore also agree that appropriately designed urban development can be accommodated in this area without compromising the landscape character or values of the Wakatipu Basin. We consider that the design of the current proposal achieves this.
- 6.6** In relation to views and visual amenity of observers in the area immediately surrounding the subject site, some change will be evident if the current proposal proceeds. Essentially, areas of rural living development will be replaced by areas of suburban density. The fact that the subject site is considerably surrounded by golf course land use means that the potential for visual amenity to be adversely affected is reduced. For users of the two roads that adjoin the site (Centennial Avenue and McDonnell Road), the increase in residential density that the proposal will bring will be evident but will have a visual logic to it and will not appear out-of-place or at odds with the overall experience of entering/leaving Arrowtown. Some immediate neighbours to the south of the subject site will visually experience denser residential development under the proposed situation than the existing. However, we consider that any adverse effects in this regard will not be of a significant degree and there is good potential for mitigation via detailed aspects of a resource consent application.
- 6.7** Overall, we consider that the proposal has considerable logic and merit in terms of landscape planning and is in accordance with the QLDC's Wakatipu Basin Land Use Planning Study.

Quality Assurance

Report prepared by Vivian and Espie for Mount Soho Trust			
Reviewed and Approved By	Ben Espie	Landscape Planner	23 rd August 2022