

## MEMO: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

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**To:** Graham Jull

**Company:** The Business Advisory Group Ltd

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**From:** James Paxton

**Date:** 28 February 2023

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**Project:** 1 Hansen Road, Frankton

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**Subject:** Landscape and Visual Assessment Memo

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Dear Graham,

The following is an initial memo on the anticipated landscape and visual effects of the proposed development at 1 Hansen Road, Frankton. It is not intended as a full Landscape and Visual Assessment of the proposal.

The landscape and visual effects assessment process provides a framework for assessing and identifying the nature and significance of potential landscape and visual effects that may result from a proposed development. Such effects can occur in relation to changes to physical elements and the existing character of the landscape and impacts on viewing audiences and visual amenity.

The methodology for preparing an assessment follows best practice and the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects guide (*Te Tangi a Te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines’ Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022*). While a full Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) has not been undertaken, we have been able to determine an anticipated level of effects based on our technical expertise and experience, familiarity with the site and wider area, and from our previous undertaking of LVA’s for other projects in the close vicinity of this site. Reset Urban Design have been involved with the development of the 1 Hansen Road site since 2021 and have been engaged as urban design and landscape architectural consultants on the project.

### 1. Project Summary

The proposed project for which a fast-track application under the **COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020** is being applied for is the consenting and construction of worker accommodation in Queenstown.

The purpose of this project is to deliver the necessary infrastructure and buildings to provide 500-600 units of worker accommodation for the greater Queenstown area. The eight proposed buildings will provide smaller bedroom and bathroom units for single/couple workers (both medium and long term) with communal facilities including cooking, services and utilities located on the ground floor of the buildings. This proposal will help to alleviate some of the pressure within the current housing/rental market in Queenstown. This will in turn enable local businesses, including tourism and services businesses, to obtain staff, and continue operating or grow, which has been a difficulty in the last few years, particularly as a result of COVID-19.



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### 2. Project Understanding

#### Location

1 Hansen Road is a large, prominent site of 3.4022 hectares on the approach into central Frankton and falls into the territorial authority of Queenstown Lakes District Council ('QLDC'). The site fronts State Highway 6 (Frankton- Ladies Mile Highway) and has vehicular access off Hansen Road, a local road. Both roads are being upgraded/redesigned/realigned through a large-scale roading upgrade and redesign partnership with Waka Kotahi and QLDC, as part of the NZ Upgrade Program ('NZUP'). This includes the provision of public transport modes and an improved bus exchange hub directly to the south-west of the site.

The Site is in the suburb of Frankton, Queenstown just north of the Queenstown Airport, and approximately 6.5Km from Queenstown Town Centre. The Frankton area is the focus of large scale urban development.



Figure 1 Site Location

Frankton sits adjacent to the north-eastern edge of Lake Wakatipu in the Wakatipu basin; and is bordered by Kawarau River to the south and the Shotover River to the east. The northern extent of Frankton lies at the foothill of both Queenstown Hill/Te Tapunui and Ferry Hill. State Highway 6 (Frankton-Ladies Mile Highway) runs along the northern and western edges and connects west to the State Highway 6A extension (Kawarau Rd) to Queenstown.

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The Queenstown Airport is centrally located to Frankton and the broader Queenstown area, and services both domestic and international flights. The suburb enjoys close views of Lake Wakatipu, the Remarkables, Queenstown Hill/Te Tapunui, Peninsula Hill, and distant views to Coronet Peak and the Crown Range. The Queenstown Event Centre (QEC) abuts the northern boundary of the Queenstown Airport and includes conference and leisure facilities along with a swimming pool, cricket pitch, football and rugby fields, indoor courts and large gym. Immediately to the west of the site are the retail and hospitality areas of Queenstown Central and FiveMile.

The site adjoins the Frankton Cemetery on the western boundary and has a long frontage to the Frankton-Ladies Mile Highway (State Highway 6/SH6). Further west of the historic cemetery is an established mixed use and commercial area at the intersection of SH6 and SH6A. The site has frontage to Hansen Road on the south-eastern corner. To the north the site adjoins Queenstown Hill/Te Tapunui with the north-western third of the site sloping up steeply towards the mountain behind.



Figure 2 Site Context (boundary in red)

### Landform + Features

The southern portion of the site is relatively flat, while the rear of the site slopes up steeply behind to the base of Queenstown Hill/Te Tapunui. The site sits within the wider landscape on the slightly elevated basin of Frankton above Lake Wakatipu and Kawarau River. The basin borders Lake Wakatipu to the west and is surrounded by large hills or mountains in almost every other direction. Peninsula Hill sits to the southwest, Kawarau Falls extends south as a valley beside the Remarkables to the southeast, the Kawarau River stretches eastward to Cromwell.



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### Cultural Values

Whakatipu, along with other areas of inland Otago, were important to southern Māori as a source of items such as tuna (eels), manu (birds), it kōuka (cabbage tree), mountain daisy (used for cloaks) and taramea (spaniarda grass) from which a fragrant oil was extracted. Important settlement sites were at Tāhuna (Queenstown), Te Kirikiri (Frankton) and at Puahuru (junction of Kawarau and Shotover rivers). Frankton was named after Frances—the wife of the area's first European settler William Gilbert Rees. He started farming at Queenstown in 1860, and Frankton was established in 1863.

### Land use + Zoning

The site sits on an interface between different land uses along the State Highway 6 corridor. The neighbouring property to the north is a large rural block of land. Directly to the west the site adjoins a historic cemetery, and a small commercial centre, located around the Frankton Rd/Kawarau Rd intersection (Terrace Junction), comprising of mainly convenience, service and retail uses. The buildings are typical 2-3 storeys and are zoned as Local Shopping Centre.

To the south the site adjoins State Highway 6, and across the highway is QLDC land currently leased as a golf course, and the events centre. The expansive QEC, with sports and community facilities, is the largest urban park in the Queenstown area and is the main recreation and sport hub in the district. A Masterplan for the park has been produced for consultation in August; the plan includes updates to the sports fields, new play areas and a transport hub.

To the east of the site is a church (City Impact Church), and another rural block of land with Business Mixed Use zoning. To the north of the site is Queenstown Hill with Rural zoning and an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) overlay. The PDP is operative for this site. The only appeal that relates to the PDP zone is limited to the location of the Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) line that traverses the site, and this appeal is district-wide. Note, the small triangle of land to the east is also a part of the site, however it does not form part of this application.

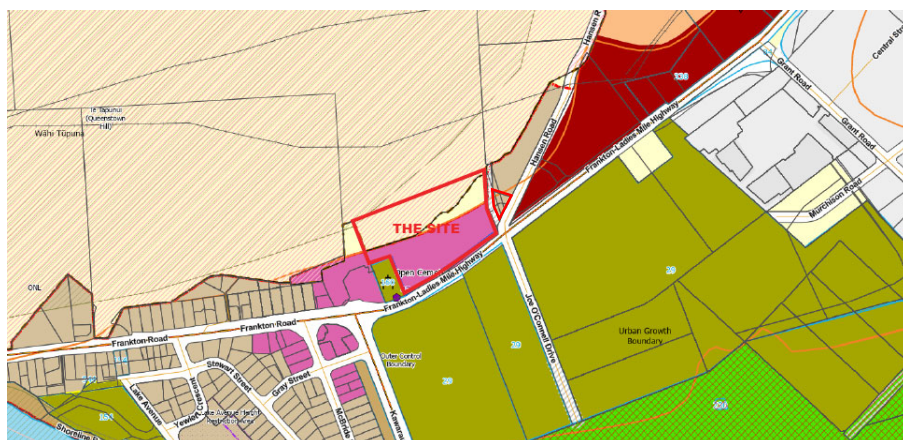


Figure 3 - Land Use Context (Site boundary outlined in red line)

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## Connections + Activities

The Site is serviced by Hansen Road which connects to the Frankton/Ladies Mile Highway (State Highway 6). All vehicle access is to be via Hansen Road to the State Highway, with no direct access onto the highway from within the site. SH6 and SH6A are important road corridors to support urban growth on the gateway to Queenstown and are subject to future upgrades. Of relevance to the site, these include intersection upgrades at SH6 /SH6A intersection, enhanced walking and cycling connections along SH6 & SH6A, improvements to the existing Frankton bus hub and new bus priority measures on SH6A. Overtime, the walking and cycling connections and public transport efficiency will be essentially improved at Frankton Junction and its surrounding area including the site, which will further facilitate commercial and business activities that are easily accessible to local residents and people in transit.

### 3. Proposal Description

The Concept Plan shows four buildings at the rear of the property (Block A, B,C and D). These buildings will be 6 storeys (approx.18m) high, with the top 5 levels incorporating worker accommodation. There are four buildings located at the front of the site. Blocks E and H are 4 storeys (approx. 12m high) and Blocks F and G are 3 stories (approx.10m) high. Refer to Fig 4.



*Figure 4 – Concept Plan*

## 4. Effects Assessment

The existing landscape and its visual context form the 'baseline' for landscape and visual effects assessments. The types of effects can be summarised as follows:

- **Landscape effects:** Change in the physical landscape, which may change its attributes, character or values.



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- **Visual effects:** Change to specific views which may change the visual amenity experienced by people.

### Landscape Effects

Assessing landscape effects requires a thorough understanding of the landscape character and importance or value of the landscape. Using this baseline, a determination of landscape sensitivity and the magnitude of change which results from a proposed development can be made to determine the overall significance of landscape effects. The sensitivity of the landscape depends upon the degree that a particular landscape or feature can accommodate change.

#### Sensitivity:

Queenstown Hill/Te Tapunui, to the rear of the site, is identified as an area of Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL). The existing site, however, is already highly modified and there are no significant natural features within the site. Therefore, the overall landscape value would be considered as *Moderate*.

Due to the scale and extent of the surrounding landscape (Queenstown Hill/Te Tapunui), the landscape has some ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences to landscape character. Urban development is anticipated on the majority of the site as provided for under the current zoning (Local Shopping Centre), however it is noted the buildings at the rear of the site (Block A, B,C and D) would be located on Rurally zoned land. These buildings are proposed as being a maximum of more than twice the height limit of the Rural zoning (8m permitted height). The buildings along the front portion of the site (Block H – E) would be lower, at 10m – 14m. Therefore, the overall landscapes susceptibility to change would be considered as *Moderate*.

#### Magnitude of Change:

The key features of Queenstown Hill/Te Tapunui (ONL) are retained and will not be impacted by the proposed development, with only the lower base of the hill affected. Due to the scale and expanse of the surrounding landscape, the key characteristics of the landscape remain intact with limited aesthetic or perceptual change being apparent. There will be some noticeable change to the immediate landscape due to the development (changing from an empty site to a built environment), however these changes are largely anticipated within the site zoning and will be viewed as an extension of the existing Terrace Junction urban form. Buildings A, B,C and D with a height of 18m is significant in this context and would have a greater level of impact. Therefore, the overall magnitude of change would be considered as *Moderate*.

### Outstanding Natural Landscape

With regards to RMA Section 6(b) *Protection of Outstanding Natural Features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development*. Queenstown Hill/Te Tapunui forms part of a larger area of ONL zoning (West Wakatipu Basin ONL) that extends from Frankton through to wider Queenstown encompassing the steep south-eastern mountain slopes of Te Taumata o Hakitekura (Ben Lomond), the steep south and eastern mountain slopes of Bowen Peak and the two elevated roche moutonnée landforms of Te Tapunui (Queenstown Hill and including Sugar Loaf). Much of the ONL is mapped as the wāhi tūpuna Te Taumata o Hakitekura (Ben Lomond) or Te Tapunui wāhi tūpuna. The very northern extent overlaps the Kimiākau (Shotover River) wāhi tūpuna. The name Te Tapunui signifies a place considered sacred to Kāi Tahu whānui both traditionally and in the present.

The ONL area has several important features including engaging and attractive short to long-range views from the Frankton Arm, Frankton (including the airport), SH6/6A, and Kelvin Peninsula to the smoother south-facing slopes of Te Tapunui (Queenstown Hill). Development along the Frankton-Ladies Mile Highway, and around



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the southern base of the ONL is anticipated and allowed for under the PDP, with zoning including Local Shopping Centre (10m building height), Business Mixed Use (12-20m building height), and High Density Residential (12-20m building height).

The ONL landform immediately to the north of the site is a relatively small hill (top of hill RL 505m) refer to Fig 5, with the site located at its base at a contour level of RL 357m. It is considered that the possibility of 3-5 storey (approx. 9.6m – 15m) buildings located at the toe of the ONL hill will not result in significant adverse effects on views of, or from, the ONL. This is due to the current PDP land zoning of the immediate area, the relatively limited viewing catchment, building orientation and the fact that the ONL itself will be unaffected.



Figure 5 – Te Tapunui (Queenstown Hill) ONL behind Terrace Junction

The proposed development will sit very much as a continuation of the existing Terrace Junction urban form and the future urban development along the Frankton-Ladies Mile Highway. The identified ONL will continue to maintain its existing character, sitting as a backdrop to the existing and future proposed urban growth. The ONL will remain legible and of prominence in the wider landscape.

### Visual Effects

A visual baseline identifies the area where the development may be visible, the potential viewing audience, and the key representative public viewpoints from which visual effects are assessed. The visual catchment of the Site is generally defined by the Frankton Junction area and the existing surrounding area. There are direct sightlines from the Queenstown Events Centre and its recreation grounds to closer viewpoints along Kawerau Drive and Hansen Road. Some distant views may be available from nearby raised landforms.

The viewing audience that will likely be exposed to views towards the proposal will generally comprise:

- Motorists and pedestrians travelling along Frankton-Ladies Mile Highway (State Highway 6/SH6), Kawerau Road and Hansen Rd;
- Workers in the commercial premises surrounding the Site;
- Recreation users of Queenstown Event Centre;
- Visitors to City Impact Church;
- Distant viewers from nearby raised landforms.
- Individuals or groups of people occupying or using the properties in the immediate vicinity, including the cemetery directly adjoining the western boundary.



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### Sensitivity:

Viewers of the site are predominantly transient - either travelling along the Frankton-Ladies Mile Highway (State Highway 6/SH6) or Kawerau Road towards and from Queenstown, or using the recreation centre, golf course and associated facilities. The site is located within the context of a highly modified urban transit corridor containing Terrace Junction, FiveMile Shopping Centre, QEC (fields, buildings, light towers), and future development proposals on neighbouring land. While it is acknowledged that viewers from Hansen Rd will have a higher level of sensitivity (moderate) due to proximity to the development and the effect on existing views, there will be a low number of viewing audiences from this location. In many of the viewpoints that would be assessed, the wider mountain landscape is the focus of the view. Therefore, the overall visual value of the views and susceptibility to change would be considered as *Low-Moderate*.

### Magnitude of Change:

The current Local Shopping Centre Zone allows the maximum building height to be 10m (approximately 3 levels). The development proposes 4 buildings along the highway frontage, with 3 levels proposed for Block F & G and 4 levels proposed for Block E & H, noting that the 4 level buildings will be 1x level above the current height control.

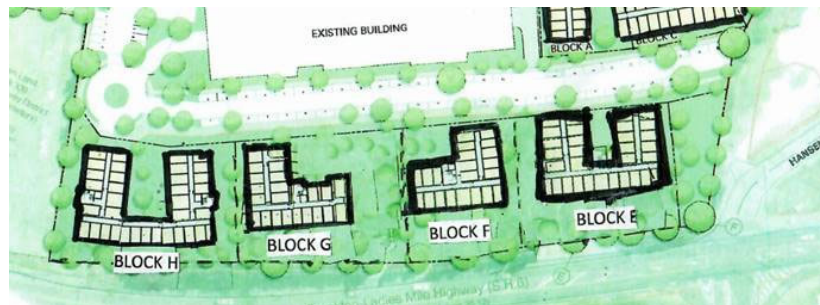


Figure 6 – SH6 Frontage Building Arrangement

Development is anticipated along this highway corridor as is evident with Terrace Junction and FiveMile Shopping Centre. Commercial and mixed-use buildings to at least three levels in height are anticipated, and the proposal is generally in keeping with the form, scale, mass and height associated with this urban form. The proposed development will generally be seen as an extension of the Terrace Junction urban form (existing 2 and 3 level buildings). There is also a large easement along the highway frontage (for utility services) as required in the recently approved subdivision, so the buildings will have a wide buffer setback allowing for landscaping and frontage treatment (tree planting etc).

The cluster of buildings to the rear of the site are less successful at integrating into the existing environment. The buildings are located on a portion of the site that is currently zoned Rural. This triangular area of Rural zoned land not overlaid with the ONL overlay at the east of the site (noted with a blue asterisk) is also generally flat and urban in nature. This triangular piece of land is considered subject to be a mapping error as there is no definition between the Local Shopping Centre zoned land and this Rural land.



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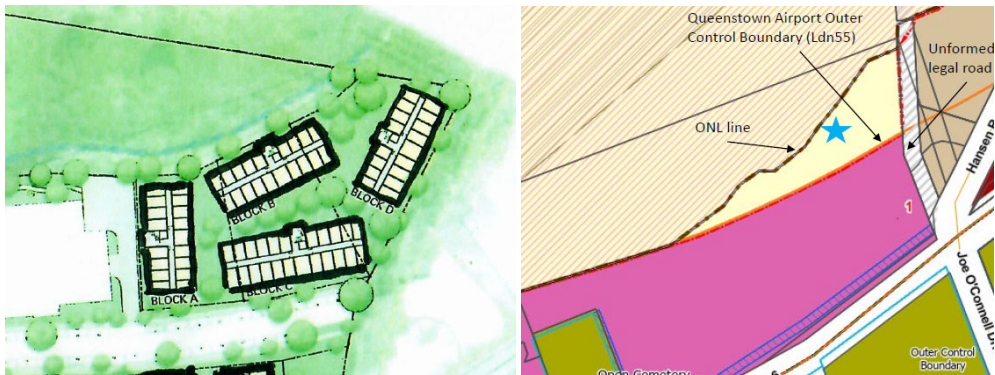


Figure 7 – Buildings to rear of site

These four buildings (Block A, B, C and D) are proposed to be 6 storeys (approx. 18m) high, 8.0m over the Local Shopping Centre zone height limit, and 10m over the permitted height in the Rural zone. The current height, arrangement and orientation means that the buildings will effectively be viewed from several important viewpoints as one large mass, and are not in keeping with the remainder of the development. The internal spacing between the blocks (amenity & circulation space) is very tight and does not appear well considered to create useable outdoor space for residents.

Distant views will generally be obscured by surrounding vegetation along the road corridors and reserve areas, and by localised topography, however it is anticipated that the four buildings to the rear of the site would be visible from the majority of views. Queenstown Hill/Te Tapunui (and the surrounding mountains) is a prominent feature in most distant to mid ground views and will draw the eye up past the proposal, which generally sits low along the base of the hill.

Nearby views will predominantly be transient (people in movement) and brief. The setback and stepping height of the buildings along the SH6 frontage will further reduce any potential impacts. The buildings address the highway frontage well whilst also providing breaks in the building massing. This allows for both visual and physical connections through to the rear of the site and views to the hill behind.

Considering the above, the overall magnitude of change to views would be considered as *Low-Moderate*.

### 5. Mitigation Measures

Suggested mitigation methods to reduce landscape and visual effects:

- a. Buildings along SH6 Frontage
  - Block E & F to be 4 storeys (approx. 12m high)
  - Block H & G to be 3 stories (approx. 10m high)
  - This will create a stepped building height from the existing Terrace Junction stepping west towards the Business Mixed Use Zone

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- b. Buildings to rear of site
  - Remove one of the buildings and re-orientate buildings north-south to create a more porous layout and reduce the sense of broad massing in this particular corner.
  - Reduce buildings heights to 4 storeys (approx. 12m high) along Hansen Rd edge and to 5 storeys (approx. 15m high) adjacent the car storage building.
- c. High quality architectural design
  - Consideration of building form
  - Façade treatment & modulation
  - Materiality
- d. High quality landscaping throughout site
  - Provide high quality landscape treatments throughout the site including comprehensive tree planting.

## 6. Conclusions

Overall, the proposed development supports Queenstown Lakes District Council's vision for providing new housing typologies (specifically worker accommodation) in a predominantly high-density urban form.

The arrangement of the proposed buildings breaks-up the perceived mass of building fronting onto the highway. The gaps between the buildings also provide visual and physical connection through to the rear of the site. These spaces allow for activity and communal outdoor spaces for the residents. With a generous setback from the highway and quality landscape treatment, it is anticipated that buildings of this height, mass and orientation (given the above mitigation measures are implemented) will integrate into the existing urban form well. The buildings to the rear of the site are less successful given the current proposed height and layout. The proposal creates a large singular building mass that will dominate views of the site. Overall, the anticipated landscape and visual effects of the development proposal would be considered **moderate**.

If the proposed mitigation measures are adopted and implemented, the overall heights of the buildings will generally be acceptable, albeit with an additional 1-3 levels over that permitted on several buildings. It is anticipated that these additional levels will not have any significant additional impact and the increase in height proposed within the site will continue to sit appropriately in the site's contextual and future development setting, despite its zoning. In addition, the various mitigation methods will be employed such as a strong landscaped frontage, adequate setbacks from road frontages, spacings between buildings and architectural detailing (i.e façade treatment & modulation) to manage any effects.

If the proposed mitigation measures are adopted into the design, the effects of the proposal on the Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) would be considered low. The proposed buildings would sit low at the

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base of Queenstown Hill/Te Tapunui, either at or above the zoning height control, and well below any height level that would impact the prominence of the hill or views to it. It is anticipated that the outcome would result in a similar relationship between Queenstown Hill and the adjacent Terrace Junction commercial area. Overall, if the proposed mitigation measures are adopted and implemented, the anticipated landscape and visual effects of the development proposal would be **low**. It is considered that the urban form of the proposed development would be in keeping with the existing and developing urban context, that expected of the zoning and relevant spatial plans and masterplans for the area. It is our opinion that the site and surrounding context is capable of accommodating such a proposal and contributing to a positive urban form along the SH6 road corridor.

Yours sincerely,

**Reset Urban Design**



**James Paxton**  
Senior Associate  
Urban Designer and Landscape Architect (NZILA Registered)

***Reset Urban Design** is an international award-winning specialist urban design and landscape architecture consultancy with established offices in Auckland and Wanaka serving a diverse range of projects across New Zealand, Asia, and the Pacific Islands. Our team of 10 professionals, qualified in the fields of landscape architecture and urban design, has been long involved with multi-disciplinary design teams and collaborations on large scale comprehensive master-planning on regenerative sites. Our project experience ranges from housing and retail developments, master planning and strategic planning, town centres, streetscapes, rural and urban parks, waterfronts, and expert assessments.*