

## Landscape Memorandum

Ridgeburn Development  
Fast-track Approvals Act Application

23 May 2025



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose and Scope

Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects (**RMM**) has been engaged by Ridgeburn (**the Applicant**) to assess the actual and potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed Ridgeburn Development. This high-level landscape assessment memo has been purposely tailored for consideration as a referral application pursuant to the Fast Track Approvals Act.<sup>1</sup> If referred, approval for the proposal would be sought using the fast track substantive application process, which would include preparation of a full Landscape Assessment Report.

The Site is 212.5ha in area, comprises 15 individual parcels of land, and is located at 122 Morven Ferry Road, between Lake Hayes-Arrow Junction Highway / State Highway 6 (**SH6**) and the Kawarau River, 7kms south of Arrowtown township. Although the proposed Ridgeburn Development responds to localised landform features, and will to a degree, be absorbed by surrounding landform, potential adverse visual effects vary from **none** to **high**, **reducing to moderate at most in five – seven years**, while effects on landscape character will be **high**, changing the Site from its current open rural pastoral character to that of a residential character. However, these effects will be well contained to its immediate setting, due to the existing topography and the visually discreet nature of the Site.

The Ridgeburn proposal includes the following:

- Approximately 1242 lots comprising standard density, medium and high density lots;
- A sequence of open spaces that weave throughout the development;
- Proposed on-Site stormwater attenuation basins and wetlands;
- A commercial and events centre adjacent to Morven Ferry Road;
- Water Reservoirs on Morven Ferry Hill (**ONL**) and waste water dispersal fields within the Kawarau River (**ONF**) terraces.
- A series of interlinked walking and cycling tracks; and
- Extensive areas of native plant revegetation.

RMM have been involved throughout the design and assessment process which has informed the proposed development response to the landscape of the Site.

This design process has included the key following steps:

- Site visits undertaken on 20/21 March 2025 and 15 April 2025.
- An analysis of the landscape character, ecology, visibility, connectivity and land use aspects of the Site and the surrounding area.
- An analysis of the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**) zoning and overlays within the Site.
- A review of the following documents:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2024/0031/6.0/whole.html>

- The Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan (**PDP**).
- The Whakatipu Basin Land Use Planning Study (March 2017).
- Co-designing the Site development plan with Novak Middleton Architects.

The landscape assessment report memo is formatted as per the following:

- A description of the landscape strategy for the proposal.
- A high level outline of selected statutory provisions that are relevant to the proposal.
- The identification and description of the receiving environment, including the Site. The receiving environment is described in terms of the landform, land cover and land use and how those landscape attributes contribute to the receiving environment's existing landscape values.
- A high level assessment of the actual and potential landscape, natural character and visual effects, including cumulative effects.
- A conclusion.

This report is accompanied by the Ridgeburn Landscape Strategy Document (**LD**) that has been prepared by RMM. This document outlines the design process in which the proposed development stems from. It contains the process used through the design phase, Site context and analysis mapping including Site photographs, relevant PDP planning maps, proposed master plan and photographs of the Site from surrounding public places.

## 1.2 Methodology

The methodology and terminology used in this report has been informed by the Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines<sup>2</sup> (**TTatM Guidelines**).

As stated above Site visits were undertaken to assist in understanding the landscape character and values within the receiving environment, refine and integrate the initial concepts through ground-truthing, and then to assess the proposal's actual and potential landscape and visual effects.

This report is tailored to suit the nature of the project and its context including the framework of the governing legislation. The statutory documents containing provisions relevant to the proposed Ridgeburn Development are found in the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**) policy framework against which this landscape assessment has been evaluated. The table included in Figure 1 outlines the rating scales that are referred to in this report a comparative scale between the seven-point scale and the 'RMA scale'.

Very Low	Low	Low - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - High	High	Very High
Less than Minor		Minor		More than Minor		Significant

**Figure 2. The seven-point landscape and visual effects rating scale and comparative scale.<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> 'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* Page 151.

## 2 The Proposal – Landscape Strategy

### 2.1 Summary Description of the Landscape Approach to the Proposal

The Ridgeburn Development will comprise of approximately 1242 lots comprising standard density, medium and high density lots as illustrated on *Sheet 23 and Sheet 27 of the LD*. The initial concept for Ridgeburn has been informed by the underlying landscape (*refer Sheet 24 of the LD*) and locates development within those areas of the Site that have a higher capacity to absorb development, in other words the less landscape sensitive areas.

### 2.2 Planting

The Ridgeburn planting will encapsulate a mix of native planting endemic to the Lakes District (*refer the proposals ecological report*) and exotic tree species with their seasonal colours synonymous with the District. In places established trees within the Site will be retained. The planting will reflect the local Wakatipu Basin amalgamation of rural and high amenity planting. Further to that a key component of the proposal is the extensive programme of native revegetation planned for the reserve network and also the slopes of Morven Hill and the terraces and scarp of the Kawarau River (*refer Sheets 26, 30 – 35 of the LD*).

### 2.3 Streetscape Design

The Streetscape design will be low-key and reflect the rural setting rather than containing urban motifs such as kerb and channel. Rather streets will be chip seal with rolled shoulders and stormwater will be collected and treated through roadside swales. A path network will provide pedestrian and cycle connections (*refer Sheet 25 of the LD*), and it is envisaged these will have a compacted gravel surface. Street lighting will be low key, with a mix of low level bollards and lighting poles. Street trees are proposed, and these will reinforce the street hierarchy and assist with wayfinding through the development (*refer Sheet 30 of the LD*).

### 2.4 Reserves

A network of reserves has been developed throughout the Ridgeburn development. The reserve spaces have been designed to enhance most of the natural landscape features within the Site by including indigenous vegetation planting proposed, to contribute to the amenity of future residents, and provide access throughout the development. The indicative walking / cycling trails will provide the primary internal trails that will connect onto the existing trail network of the Wakatipu Basin (*Refer Sheets 23 and 26 of the LD*).

### 2.5 Water Reservoirs and Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant

Refer the McKenzie and Co civil engineering services report.

### 2.6 Interfaces

Interfaces with adjoining rural properties will comprise a 10m setback encompassing a minimum six metre wide planting strip with associated perimeter shared path in places. Built form will be setback 30m from the edge of the Kawarau River ONF escarpment while a similar sized setback is provided alongside Morven Ferry Road. There are a number of existing specimen trees, along with stone walls that are proposed to be retained within the Morven Ferry Road setback. The existing high amenity alongside Morven Ferry Road will be retained. (*Refer Sheet 28 of the LD*).

## 3 Relevant Policy Provisions

### 3.1 The Government's Fast-track Approval Act 2024

*The purpose of this Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.<sup>4</sup>*

This Landscape Assessment Memorandum has been prepared in response to specific information that must be included in a referral application for a project to be considered eligible for fast-track approvals requirements at Section 134(4) of the the Fast Track Approval Act 2024 (FTAA).

### 3.2 The Resource Management Act 1991 and the Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan

As described in the Barker & Associates report the Site is located within the Rural Zone, forms part of the Morven Hill Outstanding Natural Feature (**ONF**) and partly lies within the Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone (**WBRAZ**). It is abutting and includes in part the Kawarau River ONF.<sup>5</sup> The relevant provisions are described in the Barker & Associates report.

## 4 Landscape Description

### 4.1 Extent of the Receiving Environment

The receiving environment is defined as the landscape of the eastern Whakatipu Basin, contained by the topography to a small visual catchment, which extends approximately 6km to the Crown Range to the north-east, Ben Cruachan and Remarkable Range ONL in the south, Morven Hill ONF to the west, before extending some 2km north to include Mt. Beetham, the Lake Hayes Arrow Junction Highway and Arrow Junction Lookout Point. (*Refer Sheet 03 and Sheet 05 of the LD*)

The receiving environment, including part of the Site, forms the Morven Hill PA ONF, the WBRAZ and the Kawarau River PA ONF / Wāhi Tāpuna overlay. (*Refer Sheet 06, and Sheet 07 of the LD*)

### 4.2 Description of the Receiving Environment

The Wakatipu Basin has formed by several growing and retreating glaciers that carved the wide U-shaped valley out of the schist bedrock, and left behind a varied landscape of moraine deposits, glacial till and outwash, roche moutonnees, depressions (lakes) and terrace formations.

Historically, the vegetation within the broad Wakatipu Basin would have been forest, scrub, shrubland and tussock-grassland. Forests in the area would have been dominated by Beech or Podocarp (native conifers). Kowhai were also likely to have been a dominant species. Historical and present-day agricultural activity within the region has resulted in very low levels of indigenous planting and habitat today. Vegetation within the Basin is fragmented and is dominated by exotic pasture and introduced trees.

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<sup>4</sup> Fast Track Approval Act. Page 7.

<sup>5</sup> PDP – 3.2.5.6. In Rural Character Landscapes, new subdivision, use and development in proximity to any Outstanding Natural Feature or Outstanding Natural Landscape does not compromise the landscape values of that Feature or Landscape.

The regional history of the Wakatipu Basin has been shaped by three waves of Māori migration since the year 1200. Gold was first discovered in 1862 bringing a wave of European goldminers followed by Chinese goldminers in 1864. It is understood that there are no reported Māori artefacts or interest within the Site, nor has there been any recording of gold found.

The receiving environment is predominately rural, consisting of land which has been modified by pastoral grazing / rural living which contrasts with the relatively unmodified surrounding ONF and ONL landscape.

The area of land to the north and east of the Site, broadly considered as Arrow Junction, has been used for agricultural activities, primarily grazing and crops since the arrival of the first European settlers to the area in the mid 1800's. At present, built form and domestication in the form of rural residential / hobby farm development spreads out along Morven Ferry Road and extends north towards Arrowtown and either side of the Arrow River to the east.

#### 4.3 Description of the Site

The Site is irregular in shape, bound by Morven Ferry Road to the north, Morven Hill to the west and Kawarau River to the south. The remaining boundaries adjoin rural properties which range between 2ha and 64ha, many of which contain a dwelling and accessory buildings. The north-eastern portion of the Site is located within the WBAZ Morven Eastern 'Foothills' Landscape Character Unit (**LCU18**).<sup>6</sup>

Landform within the Site ranges between 365masl to 750masl (Morven Hill – A3A4), comprises of a combination of flat to gently sloping alluvial terrace landform within the northern portion of the Site, while the southern area is comprised of elevated moraine landform with plateaus, hummocky hills, an ephemeral stream, remanent kettle lakes / wetland areas. A human-made water race winds through the site and is used for irrigation purposes.

The existing dwelling, cluster of farm buildings, including a large silage structure are surrounded by established trees, situated within the northern extent of the Site adjoining Morven Ferry Road. A number of farm shed structures are scattered throughout the Site, accessed via a farm track which runs generally north to south through the Site. Land use reflects that of a working rural pastoral character, with areas of flat to gently sloping terrain comprised of pasture grass, divided into a series of paddocks by fences and used for farming activities, including stock grazing / seasonal crops.

Landcover within the flatter to gently sloping areas is comprised of exotic pasture, rough pasture cover within less developed / steeper terrain, clusters of exotic trees and evergreen shelter belts throughout. Landcover within the southern slopes of Morven Hill ONF *'is comprised of rough grass cover, with scattered matagouri, manuka, sweet briar, hawthorn and elderberry.'*<sup>7</sup> A threatened Environments Classification (criteria – less than 10% indigenous cover) extends across the Site.

#### 4.4 Landscape Values of the Site and Receiving Environment

The landscape values of the receiving environment (physical, perceptual, and associative) form the baseline, along with the policy provisions, for an assessment of landscape and visual effects. The landscape values of the receiving environment (including the Site) stem from its past and present

<sup>6</sup> Schedule 24.8 Landscape Character Units, Queenstown Lakes District Council, Proposed District Plan Decisions Version (Oct 2021).

<sup>7</sup> Queenstown Lakes District Council | Proposed District Plan | 21.22 Schedule of Landscape Values – Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscape Priority Areas | 21.22.4 PA ONF Morven Hill: Schedule of Landscape Values (2024-05-09).



landscape attributes (landform, landcover and land use). Relevant landscape values can be drawn from the Morven Hill PA ONF Schedule<sup>8</sup> and WBAZ Morven Eastern 'Foothills' LCU18.<sup>9</sup>

The landscape character of the Site reflects that of an open rural pastoral character with the perception of a **moderate** level of naturalness within the flatter / gently sloping terrain due to limited visibility of buildings, open hummocky pastoral character, close proximity / open views to the Crown Terrace escarpment and wider mountain setting. The slopes of Morven Hill display a **moderate-high** level of naturalness, conveyed by distinctive largely unmodified landform, mosaic of pasture and native scrub cover and low level of built modification / domestication.

The perceptual and associate values associated with the receiving environment and the Site, are **moderate**.

## 5 Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

### 5.1 Potential Issues

The proposal will change the Site from its current open rural pastoral character to a residential character. Extensive areas of passive and active recreational open space have been designed throughout the development that leverage off the landform opportunities and ensuring the proposal responds to its setting.

The potential landscape, natural character and visual effects arising from the proposal are the following:

- Effects on the rural pastoral character of the Site and its open space values.
- Localised effects on the hummocky landforms and natural character of the gullies, rock, scarp faces, kettle ponds, stream and wetlands within the Site.
- Effects on visual amenity and perceptual values, and the way in which the Site's current open character contributes to the views to the surrounding mountains, hills, and peaks that have high scenic value.
- Effects of infrastructure including wastewater dispersal, size of attenuation ponds and water tanks on Morven Hill ONF.<sup>10</sup>
- Cumulative effects resulting from isolated urban development located partly within the Whakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone, which risks eroding existing physical, associative, and perceptive landscape values of LCU 17/18 and Morven Hill ONF.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Queenstown Lakes District Council | Proposed District Plan | 21.22 Schedule of Landscape Values – Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscape Priority Areas | 21.22.4 PA ONF Morven Hill: Schedule of Landscape Values (2024-05-09).

<sup>9</sup> Schedule 24.8 Landscape Character Units, Queenstown Lakes District Council, Proposed District Plan Decisions Version (Oct 2021).

<sup>10</sup> Queenstown Lakes District Council | Proposed District Plan | 21.22 Schedule of Landscape Values – Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscape Priority Areas | 21.22.4 PA ONF Morven Hill: Schedule of Landscape Values (2024-05-09).

<sup>11</sup> Queenstown Lakes District Council | Proposed District Plan | 21.22 Schedule of Landscape Values – Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscape Priority Areas | 21.22.4 PA ONF Morven Hill: Schedule of Landscape Values (2024-05-09).

- There will be positive effects arising from the proposed mitigation that is a fundamental limb to the proposal.

## 5.2 Assessment of Visibility and Visual Effects

*“Visual effects are effects on landscape values as experienced in views. They contribute to our understanding of landscape effects. They are a subset of landscape effects.”<sup>12</sup>*

*“For example, a proposal that is in keeping with the landscape values may have no adverse visual effects even if it is a large 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 small portion of the view”<sup>13</sup>*

The significance of the visual effect is influenced by the visibility, distance, duration of the view, the scale, nature and duration of the proposal, its overall visual prominence, the context in which it is seen, and the size of the viewing audience.

Perceptually, whether the proposal is considered appropriate is determined by the visual effects on the receiving environment and whether the landscape values attributed to this setting are retained or whether, if adversely affected, effects can be satisfactorily avoided, remedied, or mitigated. In general, landscape values experienced visually include the rural scenic outlook (views over rural landscape), the legibility, visual coherence of the landscape and the views to Morven Hill, Crown Terrace escarpment and wider surrounding mountains that have high scenic value.

Visual matters are integral to landscape rather than a separate category. Physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions are each experienced visually (and through other senses). However, effects on landscape values do not have to be visible to have an effect.

A desktop analysis and on-Site investigation found that the Site is visually contained within its immediate environment. However, it will be seen (to varying degrees) from the following places, with the visual catchment illustrated on *Sheet 14 of the LD*:

- Crown Range Road.
- Gibbston Highway / State Highway 6 (SH6)
- Lake Hayes-Arrow Junction Highway / SH6
- Arrow River Bridges and Queenstown Trail.
- Arrow Junction Road.
- Morven Ferry Road.
- The Kawarau River.

The viewpoint locations, representing the views gained from these places were chosen because they represent areas frequented by the public, where views (which for the most part are fleeting) over the Site are gained. It is acknowledged there may be other locations where the Site and proposal may be seen from, but it is considered these viewpoints are representative of the views towards the Site. A viewpoint location plan and panorama photographs are contained on *Sheets 14 - 19 of the LD*.

The photo panoramas show a rural character, derived from a combination of highly natural landscape character of the surrounding mountain terrain which contrasts with modified and unmodified pasture,

<sup>12</sup> ‘Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines’. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022. Paragraph 6.25.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* Paragraph 6.25.

areas of rural, rural lifestyle and urban development. There is clear evidence of human modification in the form of a scattering of rural development, farm tracks / roads, shelter belts and clusters of exotic trees, as well as distant views of Frankton and Queenstown Airport, although an open rural pastoral landscape prevails. Each viewpoint is briefly described and assessed as per the following.

### 5.2.1 Crown Range Road – Viewpoints 1-2

Viewpoint 1 is experienced from the Crown Range Scenic Lookout, a popular stopping point along the Crown Range Road located some 2km below the Crown Range Summit and viewed when looking west towards the Site located approximately 5.6km away. Viewpoint 2 is experienced from the Arrow Junction Lookout Point and this elevated location is a well-known photo destination situated at the top of Crown Terrace escarpment. The view experienced is one looking southwest towards the Site located approximately 2km away.

#### Extent of Visibility

Viewpoint 1 allows for unobstructed views across the wider Whakatipu Basin to Queenstown, Lake Whakatipu, while Viewpoint 2 provides elevated closer unobstructed views over the Whakatipu Basin. The Arrow River is visible lined with vegetation and clusters of exotic winding around the base of Crown Terrace escarpment. The Lake Hayes – Arrow Junction Highway SH6 is visible flanked either side by undulating hummocky landscape, extending south to Morven Hill which is central to the view.

The proposal, including associated infrastructure (water tanks etc) located on Morven Hill will be visible to a varying degree in these views. While visible and an apparent part of the overall scene, the detail of the proposal will not be readily discernible given the viewing distance. The proposal will result in a change in landscape character within part of the view. Consequently, the proposed development will have a **moderate** degree of adverse visual effects on the landscape values of part of the Whakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone and Morven Hill ONF, including natural character and visual amenity as experienced from the Crown Range Scenic Lookout.

For context these views are experienced when stationary. For the most part as the traveller is descending the Crown Range Road, eyes are on the twisting turning nature of the road or your gaze is out over the wider basin landscape including Arrowtown and Millbrook is experienced. The evolving landscape (including the Gibbston Resort Zone) of the Gibbston Valley is also experienced from this road

### 5.2.2 Gibbston Highway SH6 – Viewpoint 3

Viewpoint 3 represents views experienced when travelling in either direction (north or south) along Gibbston Highway SH6 and viewed when looking west towards the Site located approximately 1km away. Note, for the most part SH6 within this vicinity is flanked by roadside vegetation which limits clear views of the Site.

#### Extent of Visibility

Only a small part of the proposal will be visible (fleeting) from Gibbston Highway SH6, due to vegetation and surrounding hummocky landform topography that screens the majority of the Site from SH6. However, proposed water tanks located within the lower slopes of Morven Hill may potentially be visible from this location. The proposal will have a **very low - low** degree of adverse visual effects on the landscape values of the Whakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone and Ferry Hill ONF, including natural character and visual amenity as experienced from the Gibbston Highway SH6.

### 5.2.3 Lake Hayes-Arrow Junction Highway SH6 – Viewpoints 4-5

Viewpoint 4 represents views experienced when travelling in either direction (east / west) along the Lake Hayes-Arrow Junction Highway SH6 and viewed when looking south towards the Site located

approximately 1km away. Viewpoint 5 represents views experienced when travelling east along Lake Hayes-Arrow Junction Highway SH6 and viewed from Morven Ferry Road intersection when looking south towards the Site located approximately 1km away.

Extent of Visibility

The proposal will **not be** visible from either of these locations due to landform screening provided by Morven Hill, the surrounding hummocky terrain and roadside vegetation. Consequently, the proposed development will potentially have **no** adverse visual effects on the landscape values of the Whakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone and Ferry Hill ONF, including natural character and visual amenity as experienced from Lake Hayes-Arrow Junction Highway SH6.

#### 5.2.4 Twin Rivers Ride Cycle Trail – Viewpoints 6-7

Viewpoint 6 - represents close views experienced when walking or cycling in either direction (east / west) along the Twin Rivers Trail and viewed when looking south and west towards the Site located approximately 150-300m away. Viewpoint 7 - represents close views experienced when walking or cycling in either direction (east / west) along the Twin Rivers Trail and viewed when looking south and west towards the Site located approximately 450m -1km away.

Extent of Visibility

The proposal, in part, will be visible from the Twin Rivers Trail. However, although visible, surrounding undulating topography combined with existing trees / vegetation serves to absorb, settle in and screen future built form to varying degrees along this section of trail. Views of water tanks and other associated infrastructure located on the lower slopes of Morven Hill may be possible from these locations. Subsequently, the proposed development will have a **low** degree of adverse visual effects on the landscape values of Morven Hill ONF, including natural character and visual amenity as experienced from the Twin Rivers Ride Cycle Trail.

#### 5.2.5 Arrow Junction Road – Viewpoint 8

Viewpoint 8 - is experienced when pausing to give way at the intersection of Arrow Junction Road and Morven Ferry Road, viewed when looking south towards the Site located approximately 400m away.

Extent of Visibility

The proposal, in part, will be visible from Arrow Junction Road, although existing trees and landform provides foreground screening and areas of built form appears small in scale and subservient against the visual dominance (as a consequence of its scale, proximity, and appearance) of the distinctive landform of Morven Hill. The proposed water tanks on Morven Hill may potentially be visible from this location. The proposed development will have a **low - moderate** degree of adverse visual effects on the landscape values on this part of the Whakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone and **low** degree of adverse visual effects on the Morven Hill ONF, including natural character and visual amenity as experienced from Arrow Junction Road.

#### 5.2.6 Morven Ferry Road – Viewpoint 9

Viewpoint 9 - located 100m west of 211 Morven Ferry Road, represents near views experienced when travelling in either direction (north / south) along Morven Ferry Road, when looking south towards the Site boundary, located approximately 10m away.

Extent of Visibility

The proposed development will be clearly visible from Morven Ferry Road, including built form and infrastructure located on Morven Hill, forming a significant and immediately apparent part of the

scene, effectively changing the existing open rural character to that of an urban character. Consequently, the proposed development will potentially have an **initial moderate to high** degree of adverse visual effects on the landscape values of this part of the Whakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone. as experienced from Morven Ferry Road. In a relatively short time (five – seven years) the proposed interface mitigation treatment (*refer Sheet 28 of the LD*) will grow with the level of effect reducing to **low**.

### 5.2.7 Summary of Visual Effects

To summarise the above, the visual effects resulting from the proposed are as follows:

- Crown Range Road Scenic Lookout – **moderate** degree.
- Gibbston Highway SH6 – **low** degree.
- Lake Hayes-Arrow Junction Highway SH6 – **no** degree.
- Twin Rivers Ride Cycle Trail – **low** degree.
- Arrow Junction Road – **low - moderate** degree.
- Morven Ferry Road – **moderate to high** degree initially, after five – seven years **low**.

## 5.3 Assessment of Landscape Effects

### 5.3.1 Physical Effects

The proposal will inevitably change the current rural character of the Site from the existing rural character to a residential character. Therefore, at a site-specific level, the proposed development will have a **high** degree of adverse effects on the current rural character within the Site. However, given the Site is very contained within its immediate receiving environment, and the Site itself is a complex series of folds, terraces, spurs and flats, landscape character effects are very much confined within the context of Morven-Ferry Road setting.

The proposal responds sensitively to the underlying landscape pattern of the Site and coupled with the built form and landscape outcome envisaged (*refer project renders*), a high level of amenity will be achieved. Therefore, while landscape character will change and therefore the source of amenity will too, the resulting amenity (from a different source) will be high. Furthermore, the proposed native species revegetation will increase the existing biodiversity of the Site, which will result in a positive landscape outcome not only for the Site but the wider environment.

## 6 Landscape Mitigation

Proposed landscape mitigation within the Site involves a comprehensive suite of design initiatives and planning methodologies which have been purposefully designed to reduce overall visual prominence of the proposal. These initiatives include location, bulk, form, scale and ecological impact of built form within areas of to ensure seamless transition between the rural and residential interface.

Proposed set back areas include a 10m wide planted buffer which follows existing topography, using a mix of indigenous / exotic plant species, reflecting vegetation patterns to seamlessly merge into the surrounding rural environment. Further buffer areas include a building setback, some of which will be planted exclusively with NZ native species extending 30m from the Kawareau River ONF escarpment edge, and an additional 30m wide setback along Morven Ferry Road.

Where proposed, mitigation includes trees and shrub species to increase screening and amenity provided by existing mature trees that will be retained in places. Beyond the peripheral planted buffers, extensive planting of indigenous native species is proposed to restore areas modified / degraded by pastoral grazing, specifically prominent landforms, kettle lakes, streams and wetlands, to reduce visual prominence, enhance ecological connectivity, and further effects on visual amenity and landscape character. Within the Site, sensitive areas have been identified and protected, with built form and associated infrastructure purposefully sited within less sensitive / more visually absorbent areas to protect avoid / minimise effects on areas of higher landscape and ecological value.

The overall aim of this integrated design approach is to positively assist in mitigating / avoiding potential adverse effects of the proposal on existing landscape values, or more specifically, the physical, associative, perceptive and visual amenity values of Morven Hill ONF, part of the Whakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone, Kawarau River ONF/ Wāhi Tāpuna overlay, and the wider Remarkable Range ONL.

## 7 Conclusion

The proposal will change the Site from its current open rural pastoral character to that of a residential character. However, the master plan appropriately responds to localised landform features, appearing as a rural village in the country, which to a degree, will be absorbed by surrounding landform.

In addition to the development, the proposal will create a network of reserves, recreational open space and trails that will protect and enhance existing key landforms and geological features within the Site. Proposed indigenous vegetation will serve to enhance the surrounds of kettle ponds, ephemeral streams, wetlands, gullies, scarp faces, man-made ponds, water-races, and to integrate built form with the surrounding environment, thus create a rural village.

The assessment of visual effects has identified that the potential adverse effects vary from **none** to **high, reducing to moderate at most in five – seven years**. With regard to effects on landscape character, the proposed development will have a **high** degree of adverse effects on existing rural character within the Site. However, this is well contained to its immediate setting, essentially due to the existing topography and the visually discreet nature of the Site. Furthermore, an integrated design approach, that has been landscape lead, means future development will resemble a village within a landscape framework that settles it sensitively into the receiving environment.