

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Addendum Assessment Memo relates to Minute 2 of the Expert Panel – Further Information Request, Ayrburn Screen Hub (FTAA-2508-1093) dated 11 November 2025. Specifically, this addendum assessment addresses the following matters:

- (i) *Whether there is any 'permitted baseline' potentially relevant to the assessment of landscape and visual effects, factoring in legal and/or planning advice as required;*
- (ii) *What the effects of the project will be on landscape values enjoyed by viewers of the site from the public areas of the Countryside Trail during the period before proposed screening vegetation has matured, including simulations from viewpoints 5-9 inclusive in a form that can be compared with those already provided; (and)*
- (iii) *If the engineering assessment (per (d) above) is that a retaining structure is required, what implications (if any) that has for the assessment of landscape and visual effects, including the proposed vegetation plan.*

This addendum memo is accompanied by an Addendum Graphic Attachment (**AGA**), that contains the following:

- A map showing photo viewpoints 5 - 9;
- Photographs of the Site taken from these viewpoints (as per the original GA);
- Visual Simulations prepared by One to One Hundred Ltd (**OTOH**), showing the proposed landform modification (these are new): and
- Visual Simulations prepared by OTOH, showing the proposed landform modification and planting (as per the original GA).

2 Additional Commentary

2.1 Permitted Baseline

- (i) *Whether there is any 'permitted baseline' potentially relevant to the assessment of landscape and visual effects, factoring in legal and/or planning advice as required;*

2.1.1

When the original landscape assessment report (LAR) - dated 15 August 2025, was prepared, it was understood that the future subdivision and land use of the Residential R Activity Area (**RAA**) as shown on the Ayrburn Structure Plan (as shown on Figure One following) could be considered as a permitted baseline. This had been set out at 4.2.6 of the LAR, as per the following:

4.2.6 Permitted Baseline

The Site sits within the Ayrburn Structure Plan and the provisions relating to this within Chapter 24. This would enable the development of four rural lifestyle lots between 6000m² – 1ha as per Rule 24.5.1.6A and Rule 27.6.1 within the residential R Activity Area shown in Figure 5.¹

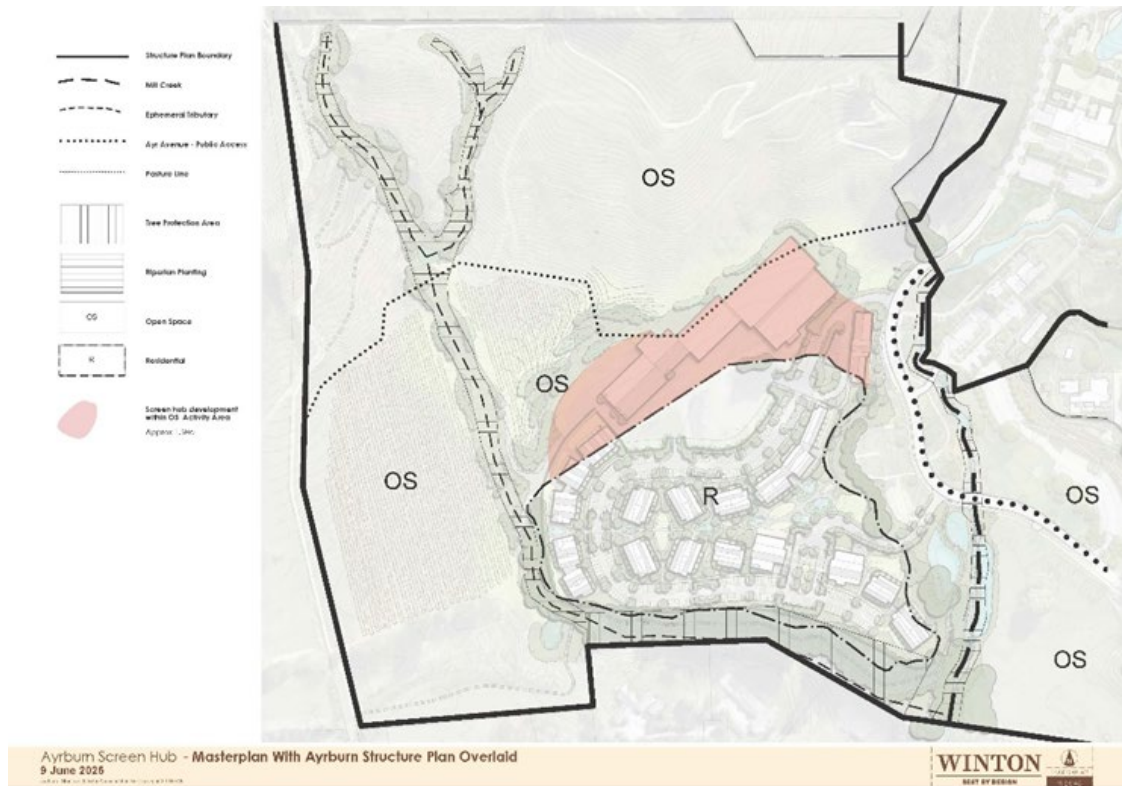


Figure 1. Masterplan with Ayrburn Structure Plan Overlaid

The Graphic Attachment (**GA**) to the LAR included visual montages of a potential built form outcome (i.e. permitted baseline) as seen from selected representative viewpoints 6 and 7 (*refer Sheets 34 and 36, GA*) from the Countryside Trail/Te Araroa Trail. Further to that, in the body of the LAR, comments were made regarding this ‘permitted baseline’ and potential development enabled by the Ayrburn Structure Plan.

Essentially consideration was given to an outcome where the RAA could be subdivided into four large rural living lots averaging 1ha in size on which there could be four significant houses with associated boundary and internal planting and potentially including the likes of tennis court(s), swimming pool(s), and the like. Comment was also made that this would in itself have an effect on the values of ‘openness’, ‘spaciousness’ and ‘rural character’ associated with this area of the Site.

2.1.2

It is now my understanding (based on legal advice) that given both subdivision and land use within the Ayrburn Structure Plan is a Restricted Discretionary Activity (RDA) within the framework of the PDP, then such activity can not be used as a ‘permitted baseline’. As outlined in the LAR and shown in the GA, future development of the RAA would be potentially seen from those representative viewpoints 5 – 8 (and possibly 9) on the Countryside Trail/Te Araroa Trail. It would either not be seen, or would be indistinguishable, from the balance (13 of the 17) of the viewpoints.

¹ Landscape Assessment Report – Proposed Ayrburn Screen Hub, 15 August 2025 – Page 22

Therefore, if the future development of the Structure Plan can not be taken into account in an assessment of effects, the following assessment has been undertaken to provide clarification for the Panel. It is my opinion that the conclusions drawn in the LAR in regard to potential adverse landscape and visual amenity values, fundamentally do not change to any great degree. However, for completeness, I make the following assessment.

Additional Assessment

2.1.3

Public users of the Countryside Trail/Te Araroa Trail Viewpoints 5 - 9

(Refer to Sheets 3 – 23 of the AGA)

a. Description of the Views

The series of viewpoints located along the Countryside Trail/ Te Araroa Trail view the Site from the western Site boundary at a distance of between 0.32km and 0.52km approximately from the centre of the Site *(Refer to Sheet 2 of the AGA for photo viewpoint locations)*.

The audience for this series of viewpoints are the trail users traveling north and south for approximately 600m on the gravel track which abuts the Site boundary. The Countryside Trail in this location doubles as part of the Te Araroa Trail, a busy and popular recreational track used by walkers, runners, and cyclists alike. The walkway runs up the western edge of the Site and climbs Wharehuanui Hills connecting Speargrass Flat Road with the Millbrook Resort and beyond. This section of the Countryside Trail/Te Araroa Trail links Arrowtown to the Old Lower Shotover Bridge and in doing so passes through the residential environment of Millbrook, properties adjacent to Speargrass Flat Road and the northern end of Lake Hayes.

The PDP framework sets out that only the views from the trail located outside of the Site need to be considered for its impact and effects. There are five locations along the trail where views of the anticipated development will be visible.

From these sections of the trail views take in a broader landscape setting that includes the Crown Range, Mount Beetham and The Remarkables in the background. These form the skyline within these views and one's eye is drawn to this given their dominance and visual presence. In the mid ground the Crown Terrace, Bendemeer and associated landform provide a physical and visual backdrop to the more open pasture character that is evident in the foreground of these views.

Within the foreground the heavily vegetated south edge of the Site is a dominant feature of these views.

b. Visibility

The proposed facility will be seen from this section of the Queenstown Countryside Trail/ Te Araroa Trail as represented by the series of viewpoints 5-9 and associated visual simulations *(Refer to Sheets 3 -23 of the AGA)*. Note, following the proposed landform modification the built form component of the proposal will not be seen from viewpoint 9.

From elevated views on the trail (Viewpoints 5 – 7) the proposed development will be viewed as a cluster of built form located at the bottom of Christine's Hill and below the viewer's natural line of sight. The built form development within the Residential Area part of the Site will be seen, however from these viewpoints the film studio buildings will be screened by the existing Christines Hill landform and the extended spur landform. To the front of the spur extension will be the revegetated gully that will appear (although by way of different vegetation type) an extension of the existing willows currently growing within the gully.

Primarily the proposed built form will be viewed as a cluster of gable roofs (like a small village), interspersed by exotic trees and a framework of native planting from these viewpoints. The proposed built form will appear recessive within the receiving environment due to the use of the local architectural vernacular, and the natural materiality of the proposal. The proposal also includes the continuation of the planting of grapevines within this area, which will be retained on the flat land, west of the proposed built form and abutting the Countryside Trail/ Te Araroa Trail. While in Viewpoints 5-7 some built form of the proposal will be seen, these vines in combination with the proposed spur extension and native planting will preclude views of the proposed built form from Viewpoint 8.

The views towards the proposed facility from the Countryside Trail/ Te Araroa Trail will continue to be dominated by the wider landscape setting. The riparian planting, mitigation planting in association with the spur extension, and the grape vines that will continue to be planted in the fore and middle ground will introduce visual complexity and, therefore, help settle the overall proposal into the landscape from the elevated viewpoints. In other words, it will read as a comprehensive and well-considered development, sympathetic to its setting.

As mentioned above, from these viewpoints the proposed vines, landform and mitigation planting will improve the absorption capacity of this landscape that will reduce the visibility of the cluster of built form being located within this area. In the case of Viewpoint 8, the landscape will in time screen the proposed facility from this section of the Countryside Trail/ Te Araroa Trail. The increase in the landscape patterning that results from a vineyard and the seasonal changes associated with that, will provide further visual interest and a vitality to this landscape setting.

When walking south along the trail, expansive views out over the Wakatipu Basin can be experienced. These views include the dominant backdrop of the north-facing flanks of the Remarkables range, Slope Hill, and Morven Hills. Within the Wakatipu Basin, a moderate amount of existing development is visible both east, west, and to the south of the Site. This development is in the form of isolated and clustered dwellings with associated structures and vegetated settings.

c. Effect on Visual Amenity

The anticipated change encompasses only a small part of the overall scene. However, the visibility of part of the proposed development (as seen in Viewpoints 5 - 7) will reduce the current rural scenic outlook due to the reduction of open pasture and the introduction of built form. The built form that will be seen in this view is that which is proposed to be located in the Residential Activity Area. The film studio and associated buildings proposed within the Open Space Activity Area will be obscured by landform and therefore will not be seen in these views.

Views to the backdrop hills and mountains will be maintained however some of the proposed built form will now be seen in the middle ground to these mountain views. The existing planting, which is to be retained within the wider Ayrburn site, will ensure that the proposed built form is only fleetingly (dependent on mode of movement – i.e. walking compared to biking) visible from these representative views.

The proposed development presents a greater intensity of built form than expected under the current provisions when viewed from these viewpoints. In effect, given that the proposal will be viewed in the context of the existing visible development within the landscape pattern of this part of the Wakatipu Basin, and the immediate receiving environment, in combination with the proposed vegetation and landform mitigation, it is considered that any potential adverse visual amenity effects arising can be successfully mitigated.

One must also bear in mind the sensitivity of the receptor and the activity they are engaged in while using the track. A local familiar with the area, will have a greater appreciation of the change within

the landscape than say a visitor experiencing it for the first time. Someone walking will have more time to gaze and ponder than someone running or cycling. Coupled with this is the physical condition of the trail. In this location it is steep, fenced on both sides and for cyclists there are limited areas to stop. This needs to be taken into account when considering potential adverse effects on the user of the trail.

Overall, it is anticipated that adverse effects on visual amenity as experienced from viewpoints 5 – 9, which are representative of users of the Countryside Trail/ Te Araroa Trail in this location, will be **Low – Moderate to Moderate** as compared to **Low to Low – Moderate** as initially assessed in the LAR.

d. Effect on Identified Perceptual and Associative Values as Experienced from these Viewpoints

The perceptual values identified at 4.3 of the LAR relevant to these viewpoints include scenic views, legibility and expressiveness of the surrounding mountain backdrop, an evolving and modified landscape, a sense of openness and spaciousness, and transient qualities associated with seasonal change. Associative values include the heritage value of Ayrburn (for those aware of it) and recreational values associated with the Countryside Trail/ Te Araroa Trail.

While the proposal will be seen in the foreground this will not detract from those perceptual values that relate to the wider landscape setting. The form and expression of the background landscape including the Crown Range, the Remarkables and the Crown Terrace remain as dominant elements in this view with the proposal comprising a small part of the overall scene. A sense of overall openness remains but will be reduced on Site.

Therefore, from these viewpoints, it is my opinion potential views of the proposal will not change the viewers perception and appreciation of the mountains and surrounding landscape. The ability to clearly see and interpret the natural formation of the mountainous backdrop remains. However, one's perception of openness of the Site, along with its current limited contribution to rural character, will change as experienced from these viewpoints.

However, from the Countryside Trail/ Te Araroa Trail, irrespective of which way you are traveling the user would have experienced built form and development (for example Millbrook and the dwellings in the locale of Speargrass Flats Road and Lake Hayes) within the surrounding landscape. Some (locals) may also have a prior knowledge of Ayrburn while others (visitors including international tourists) may not. In a perceptual sense the Site does not exist in isolation, neither do the modified areas within the surrounding landscape setting.

The experience moving through the landscape when cycling, walking or running the Countryside Trail/ Te Araroa Trail, is an interchange between a series of interconnected environments, openness and enclosure, built form and paddocks, managed and unconstrained landscape, where the characteristics of one, often serves to emphasise the valued characteristics of another. This is the context in which the viewer will experience the proposal from these viewpoints.

Therefore, the proposal as seen from these viewpoints, will not necessarily be unexpected nor be read in isolation from Ayrburn or adjacent development. From these viewpoints the viewers perception of the mountains and of the surrounding landscape character will not fundamentally change. For these reasons, it is anticipated that adverse effects on the identified perceptual values as currently experienced from viewpoints 5 - 7 will be **low - moderate** at most, as compared to **low** at most as initially assessed in the LAR.

In associative terms, potential adverse effects on the historic associations of Ayrburn, including the mature trees and pastoral areas, and the collection of historic farm buildings and homestead will be **very low**. The reason for this is it is considered the proposal will not materially impact heritage values. In fact, the proposal may well be considered complementary to the evolving role Ayrburn is playing from a hospitality and tourism perspective and for some it will be associated with this.

The recreation opportunities for biking, walking, and running that the Countryside Trail/Te Araroa Trail provides will not be adversely affected by the proposal.

e. Effects on the Character & Values of WBRAZ – LCU8

Chapter 24 of the PDP describes the scenic and character and environmental values of the zone. Further to that, Schedule 24.8 in Chapter 24 of the PDP describes the scenic and environmental values of the Site as part of the wider LCU8 setting. The focus of the following discussion is on any potential adverse effects arising from the proposal as experienced from viewpoints 5 – 9.

The focus of the LCU's is on the identification of the landscape characteristics and visual amenity values to be maintained and enhanced, while identifying development absorption capacity and associated landscape and visual change. Given this, it is required that any development maintain and/or enhance those values.

The PDP provides that part of the Site has future capacity for development. Any future built form shall occur in the two areas marked as 'R-Residential' as it is considered the development capacity of these areas is 'Moderate'². Outside of these areas there is an Open Space zoning that provides for the maintenance and enhancement of the existing values of these areas of the Site. Therefore, the PDP provides that development enabled by the Ayrburn Structure Plan, and associated provisions would maintain and enhance the values identified for LCU8.

The attributes that contribute existing rural amenity - namely the open areas on the wider Ayrburn site, will remain and an additional vineyard and all its seasonal benefits will be established on the land adjacent to the Countryside Trail/ Te Araroa Trail. The existing character values of the trail, range from the urban parkland condition within the Millbrook Resort area above Wharehuanui Hills, to the more open pastoral character as it traverses the south slopes of these hills. From the trail longer views of The Remarkables, the Crown Range and enclosing hill and mountainous landform influences the landscape character one experiences. The immediate LCU8 setting is open rural pasture as one descends the Wharehuanui Hills onto the flat pastoral landscape.

The elevated view while on the trail reveals residential development being extensively located and partially visible within a visually complex and compartmentalised landscape matrix. While on the slopes of Wharehuanui Hills, longer views are framed and obscured by randomly placed exotic and deciduous trees all of which contribute valued seasonal character to this landscape.

The development as proposed will result in change occurring to this 'local landscape' of the wider LCU8. Pastoral grasses will be replaced by vineyards, drainage swales are to be revegetated, and development will be incorporated into a revised matrix. This change is not considered to be adverse and is anticipated within LCU8.

Development partially visible and integrated within pastoral and/or productive landscapes is an existing notable quality of this landscape. An additional value is the textural quality of the

² QLDC PDP – Chapter 3 Strategic Direction 3.1B.5.b.iii. – **Moderate** capacity, means the capacity of the landscape character unit to accommodate subdivision and development without compromising its identified landscape character and while maintaining its identified visual amenity values.

contrasting vegetation cover and the temporal seasonal change that one experiences throughout the year as a result.

The proposal will add a series of buildings for use as a Screen Hub facility into a contained area of a rural landscape. The additional built form will have a low-moderate cumulative impact on the rural pastoral qualities of the landscape.

The impact of development on this landscape is to be mitigated to a large extent by the established vineyard on the flat portion of this Site that abuts the trail. The existing vineyard contributes both significant pattern and texture as well as intense seasonal variation and provides a reasonable buffer to the development proposed. Due to the existing and proposed containment of the development cluster, the new built form will quickly become integrated into this changed landscape.

Rural character and amenity values will remain high and therefore the impact of the proposal on the values identified to be maintained and enhanced within LCU8, when experienced from viewpoints 5 – 9, are considered to be **low to low – moderate** as compared to **very low – low** as initially assessed in the LAR. This accords also to the physical, perceptual and associative values identified above.

Following a review of the key landscape characteristics and visual amenity values identified, along with an understanding of the potential issues, constraints and opportunities identified for LCU 8 it is considered adverse effects of the proposed development on these values can be appropriately managed. It is considered the proposed development is in a location that satisfactorily maintains and enhances landscape character and visual amenity values of LCU 8, therefore avoiding inappropriate cumulative adverse effects on landscape values identified for the LCU.

It has separately been established that parts of the Site have the potential to absorb development whilst maintaining the environmental characteristics and visual amenity values of the LCU. It is considered the proposed Screen Hub facility will satisfactorily maintain landscape character and visual amenity values as experienced from viewpoints 5 - 9.

f. Summary

Overall, it is considered that the adverse effects arising from the proposal on landscape and visual amenity values as experienced in viewpoints 5 – 9 will range from **low to moderate** as compared to **very low to low - moderate** as initially assessed in the LAR.

2.2 Temporary Effects on Landscape Values for those users of the Countryside Trail

(ii) *What the effects of the project will be on landscape values enjoyed by viewers of the site from the public areas of the Countryside Trail during the period before proposed screening vegetation has matured, including simulations from viewpoints 5-9 inclusive in a form that can be compared with those already provided.*

2.2.1 Regarding this matter I make the following additional comments and refer the Panel to the Addendum AGA that contains images prepared by OTOH for viewpoints 5 – 9 that show the earth mound (extended spur) prior to proposed planting establishing. For ease of comparison, existing viewpoint photos are shown, followed by the simulation modelling showing the earth mounding, and lastly the visual simulations showing the planting are shown.

Note, following the proposed landform modification the built form component of the proposal will not be seen from viewpoint 9.

The original simulations show the proposed planting after 10 years of growth, which has the beech trees shown at around 5m in height. Note the software used for the visual simulations randomises the heights by +/- 30% to make it look more natural.

The Winton Ayrburn Design Report details the planting proposed for the spur extension, indicating that the species to be planted shall be at 1.2m spacings and the grade of plant at time of planting will be a RT1000. This is a root trainer grade commonly used in large scale native revegetation planting and plants at this grade are typically 200-300mm tall. The exception to that are the proposed beech trees that are specified to be planted at 45L grade, which are typically between 1.5m and 2.5m tall at time of planting.

From on-site observations of the same species proposed for the spur extension, that have been planted on the scarp faces of the Waterfall Park Valley, one could expect average plant growth rates of around 700mm/year for the good majority of the species selected to be planted, with the beech trees achieving 800mm/year and the ribbonwood species approximately 1.0m/year.

It is also important to remember that the planting of the spur extension will follow as closely as practicable the forming of this landform. Therefore, there will be planting at various heights establishing on the mound from the outset, and prior to building being undertaken. And, also building will not happen all at once i.e. plants will be growing as the construction of buildings is happening too. Based on the growth rates of the planting across Ayrburn to date, one could conservatively expect planting on the mound to achieve heights of 1.5m after two years to 3.5m after five years.

During construction (and immediately following construction), and prior to the planting attaining the heights shown in the simulations, there will be part of the proposed built form that will initially be seen from these selected viewpoints. Note, the mounding will screen the film studio buildings in their entirety from the outset, and it will be only some of the accommodation buildings (mainly rooves) that will be seen (*refer viewpoints 5 – 8*).

2.2.2

Overall, the additional modelling demonstrates the effectiveness of the proposed landform spur in screening a lot of the proposed activity – as well as screening some of the existing built form in Ayrburn. It is considered that temporary adverse effects on the landscape values enjoyed (*experienced*) by viewers using the Countryside Trail/Te Araroa Trail will occur over an assumed period of approximately two - three years for viewpoint 8, and approximately five years for viewpoints 5 – 7, bearing in mind that some advanced grade beech trees are proposed in strategic locations at a height of 2.5 m at time of planting pre-construction. These beech trees will provide 'spot screening' rather than 'blanket screening', punctuating and breaking up the visible built form.

For viewpoints 5 – 7 these potential adverse temporary effects would be **moderate** at most and for viewpoint 8 these would be **low – moderate**. For viewpoint 9 there is **no** effect as built form will not be seen following the proposed landform modification. As discussed in the LAR effects will continue


to reduce within ten years post construction from these viewpoints to generally **Low-Moderate to Low** respectively. I set this out in the following table.

Viewpoint	Location	Level of Adverse Effect on Landscape Values Prior to Planting Establishing	Level of Adverse Effect on Landscape Values Following Planting Establishing	Component Visible Prior to Planting Establishing
Viewpoints 5 - 7	Countryside Trail	Moderate (at most)	Low - Moderate	Parts of the Film Facility Offices and Workrooms and Crew Accommodation (western most units)
Viewpoints 8 - 9	Countryside Trail	None to Low - Moderate	Low	Parts of the Crew Accommodation
All other Viewpoints	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

2.3 Potential Effect of Retaining Wall

(iii) If the engineering assessment (per (d) above) is that a retaining structure is required, what implications (if any) that has for the assessment of landscape and visual effects, including the proposed vegetation plan.

As I understand no retaining is required (beyond what is already shown at the base of the backlot area), as set out in the geotechnical memo that forms part of applicant's response to Minute 2, a response to this query is not required.



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Tony Milne

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