

To: Chair, Fast Track Panel

From: Shannon Bray, Registered Fellow Landscape Architect

Project: Ridgeburn – Arrowtown Junction

Subject: Wayfinder Peer Review of RMM Landscape Assessment for Ridgeburn Ltd

Date: 25 February 2026

Introduction to Peer Review

Wayfinder Landscape, Planning and Strategy Ltd (Wayfinder) has been engaged to peer review the Landscape Assessment Report of 20 February 2026 prepared by Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects (RMM) for the proposed Ridgeburn Development located at 122 Morven Ferry Road, Arrow Junction.

This peer review has been prepared in accordance with the requirements under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024. This requires an evaluation of the validity of methods and conclusions through objective feedback on the quality and rigor of the work. It does not introduce new information or evidence but may indicate where that is required. The peer review also follows the guidance on landscape assessment peer review from Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines published by the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Tuia Pito Ora (*Te Tangi a te Manu*).

The peer review has considered the Landscape Assessment Report, viewpoint photographs, architectural masterplan and spatial plan layout in the evaluation of this landscape assessment.

Methodology of the Peer Review

The methodology of this peer review follows *Te Tangi a te Manu* with consideration of the degree to which the principal landscape assessment report (the LAR) provides:

- ▶ An appropriate methodology and method which is applied in the assessment
- ▶ Relevant existing landscape description
- ▶ Clear proposal description
- ▶ Identification and framing of assessment in response to relevant statutory provisions
- ▶ Identification of issues, and nature and magnitude of effects
- ▶ Measures including mitigation to manage effects
- ▶ Credible and consistent overall conclusions.

The methodology contained in *Te Tangi a te Manu* emphasises appraisal of the LAR, not a parallel assessment. Again, this means that the peer review does not introduce any new information but considers only what has been included in the LAR.



Peer Review of Principal Landscape Assessment Report

Methodology

The LAR is structured based on the methodology set out in *Te Tangi a te Manu*. The methodology in Section 2.2 begins by listing multiple site visits undertaken across different seasons. These visits were used to understand the landscape's character, the way it is experienced from various public and private viewpoints, and how physical features, land uses and patterns of visibility shape the receiving environment. This forms the foundation of the methodology and informs all subsequent analytical steps. The LAR applies the seven-point effects rating scale provided by *Te Tangi a te Manu* to evaluate both landscape and visual effects.

The methodology is tailored to the statutory context of a Fast-track Approvals Act application, integrating RMA Part 2 considerations and the relevant district plan provisions (further detail on this below). The LAR acknowledges the current absence of mana whenua input and avoids making assumptions about cultural values, instead identifying this as an information gap to be addressed through ongoing consultation.

The LAR undertakes structured analyses of landscape character, visibility, connectivity and land use, supported by planning documents, zoning overlays and spatial information. In line with *Te Tangi a te Manu*, it identifies and describes the landscape's physical, associative and perceptual attributes, using these to articulate the existing landscape values that form the basis for assessing change.

Visual effects are understood as a subset of landscape effects, and the significance of change is assessed by the extent to which any change may alter underlying landscape values. Representative viewpoints have been selected to reflect how the proposal would be experienced by different viewing audiences, from nearby road users to distant elevated lookouts.

Wayfinder Comment

The LAR applies the methodology effectively throughout. It follows an appropriate format that in my opinion is tailored to and suitable for the nature of the proposal. The application of the methodology is reviewed below with the substantive context described and reviewed in subsequent sections of this peer review.

The Proposal

The description of the proposal is provided first, which I consider appropriate, and describes the site location, nature and scale of the proposal, timeframes and staging, and identifies the district plan context at a high level. In my opinion this demonstrates a good understanding of the project and its context within the Whakatipu Basin.

Policy provisions

The LAR follows with the relevant statutory provisions under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024, Resource Management Act and district planning documents. I consider this accurately identifies the planning and policy context of the proposal. I note that the comments on provisions in the Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan 2021 go straight into analysis rather than description which in my opinion does not provide a clear identification of the relevant provisions.

Landscape description

The LAR describes the wider landscape context to what I consider is a good level of detail, with a description of key landscape features and urban development. It establishes the extent of the receiving environment (5.1.1) with reference to the Landscape Design Document (LDD) and follows with a detailed description (5.2) that reflects the



attributes from *Te Tangi a te Manu* and draws heavily on the Proposed District Plan. Section 5.3 follows with a description of the site, identifying relevant considerations at a high level. The visual catchment/viewing audience is also established in this section and is clearly defined with reference to the LDD, however no mention is made of the method used to identify this.

Potential issues

Potential issues are included in Section 6 a short list of potential effects. I consider they provide a clear indicator of the effects for the LAR.

Assessment of effects

The assessment of effects is broken down into assessment of visibility and visual effects (7.1) with detailed analysis of viewpoints, and overall summary. In my opinion, this does not strictly follow the methodology guidance of *Te Tangi a te Manu* which places visual effects as a subset of landscape effects, but I consider that the approach does not materially reduce the suitability of the LAR. There is methodological detail about how the viewpoints were selected – that they are representative, frequented by the public and where views of the site are gained, which I consider appropriate criteria and add detail to the missing visual catchment identification method noted above.

The assessment of landscape effects (7.2) is further broken down into Morven Hill and the Kowarau River which I consider is useful in locating the proposal in context for the LAR. This is followed with assessment at the wider landscape level (Whakatipu Basin) and the overall receiving environment (Morven Ferry Triangle) which supports understanding across a range of scales appropriate to the proposal.

Assessment of policy provisions

In my opinion, the LAR covers the relevant policy provisions, broken down into the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan chapters including objectives and policies.

Conclusion

A conclusion is provided in the LAR covering concluding remarks of the overall effects assessment.

In my opinion, the methodology and how it has been applied aligns with good practice guided by *Te Tangi a te Manu*. Overall, I consider the methodology and methods used in the LAR are appropriate and suitable for consideration in decision making.



Landscape Description

The LAR identifies the relevant landscape character and values in Section 5 by first describing the physical components of the receiving environment at the wider (Whakatipu Basin) scale and establishing the extent of the receiving environment – the Morven Ferry Triangle. It documents the major landforms including Morven Hill, the Kawareau River corridor, the moraine foothills, hummocky terrain and alluvial terraces. It draws on information gathered during site inspections, district plan landscape schedules and existing landscape character unit descriptions. It establishes the physical landscape structure, landform patterns, vegetation cover and land use as the basis for understanding landscape character.

For perceptual values, the LAR collates the descriptions found in the district plan's Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape schedules and in the relevant Landscape Character Unit material. It summarises how the existing environment is perceived in terms of naturalness, coherence, legibility, openness, enclosure and memorability. These perceptual attributes are written as they are expressed in the statutory landscape descriptions and as observed during site visits.

The LAR summarises associative values by referencing the statutory descriptions of cultural and historical connections associated with the area. It records Kāi Tahu ancestral associations with Morven Hill and the Kawareau River, drawing directly from the district plan's Schedule of Landscape Values.

A description of the site is provided before the LAR integrates the landscape attributes into a landscape characterisation and identification of values of the receiving environment. It relies on established district plan landscape classifications such as the Outstanding Natural Feature status of Morven Hill and the Kawareau River, and the characteristics of the Whakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone and Landscape Character Units to structure this description. This forms the existing landscape values against which the LAR later evaluates potential landscape and visual effects.

There is a brief description of potential landscape issues, identifying impacts on the Morven Hill and Kawareau River Outstanding Natural Features, rural character, and local landforms and ecosystems within the site, as well as reduced visual amenity. It raises questions about whether the development aligns with the existing urban development pattern of the Whakatipu Basin and surrounding area.

Wayfinder Comment

Wider Landscape Context – The Whakatipu Basin

In my opinion, the definition of the Whakatipu Basin is an appropriate scale to understand the wider context of the proposal, as it represents a legible and coherent landscape type consistent with general understanding of the Whakatipu Basin context and as described in the PDP.

Extent of the Receiving Environment – The Morven Ferry Triangle

The LAR identifies the Landscape Character Unit (LCU) 18 and the Morven Hill ONF in Section 4.3 which is cross-referenced to Section 5.1.1 where the LAR references LDD Sheet 6. I consider this provides a clear delineation of the receiving environment.

Description of the Receiving Environment

The dimensions of landscape described in *Te Tangi a te Manu* have been used to categorise the landscape attributes and values drawn from the PDP. I consider the current rural zoning and focus on physical and natural features of the landscape is reasonable due to the current PDP intent.



Description of the Site

I consider the description of the site is clear and demonstrates an understanding of the extent of the proposal area, and the existing landscape character. In my opinion, the use of descriptors such as landform, land-use and landcover weaken the link with the landscape characterisation section and risks focussing more on the physical dimension rather than a more holistic description of the landscape, however this does not materially reduce the suitability of this section.

Landscape Character and Values of the Receiving Environment

The values description captures the reasoning for the Morven Hill and Kawarau River ONF classification and identifies the most relevant landscape values for the LAR. Overall, I consider the description of landscape character and values is appropriate and suitable for consideration in decision making.

Proposal Description

Section 2.1 and Section 3 of the LAR provide a description of the proposal. It covers the location, size, and overall structure of the proposed development. It outlines the main components of the proposal, including residential neighbourhoods, a commercial village hub, and associated community facilities. It explains how the development is intended to be staged over time and provides an overview of the scale of residential development proposed.

This is followed by the landscape context of the site that identifies areas subject to landscape overlays and explains where development, infrastructure, and revegetation are proposed in relation to these areas. It highlights the extent of open space, reserve land, and native restoration and notes how these areas are intended to connect with walking and cycling routes. Specific landscape-related measures are described, including revegetation on Morven Hill and within the Kawarau River corridor, public access to existing tracks, and the general approach to locating and designing infrastructure to reduce visual prominence.

The LAR concludes by explaining how the site is organised into a series of neighbourhoods and how these relate to open space and local amenities, framing the proposal in terms of its overall landscape structure.

Wayfinder Comment

In my opinion, the LAR description of the proposal is detailed and includes the type and number of residential and commercial lots (i.e. land-uses) and the areas of reserve, native restoration and recreation.

I consider the proposal description sufficiently clear and detailed that it can be relied upon in decision making.

Statutory Context and Policy

Section 4 identifies and describes the relevant statutory context, including the Fast Track Approval Act 2024, relevant provisions from the RMA, and the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan. It provides detail on the relevant provisions.

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA)

The LAR outlines how the Fast track legislation prescribes consideration of landscape, natural character and visual matters including through reference to RMA Part 2, including Sections 5, 6 and 7. In doing so, it

- Establishes the fast-track process as an alternative to Plan Change and Resource Consent pathways.



- ▶ Recognises that the proposal will be contrary to rural zoning but is still eligible for fast-track assessment.

Proposed District Plan (PDP) – Zoning and Overlays

The PDP identifies the majority of the site as Rural Zone, with the Whakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone applying to the eastern portions. The western part of the site is overlain by the Morven Hill Outstanding Natural Feature, and the site is located adjacent to the Kawarau River Outstanding Natural Feature. The site lies outside the Urban Growth Boundary and includes land identified as Landscape Character Unit 18 – Morven Eastern Foothills, as well as Rural Character Landscape (RCL) areas.

Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan (QLSP) 2021

The LAR also situates the statutory landscape provisions within the broader strategic intent of the Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan, noting its vision for long-term settlement patterns and areas identified for urban growth. Although not a statutory document, its goals and growth assumptions are reported as contextual information that shapes how landscape and planning policies are interpreted. The LAR notes that the QLSP:

- ▶ Identifies the site as Rural;
- ▶ Does not identify the site as an area for future urban growth; and
- ▶ Emphasises consolidated growth along two key development corridors.

Wayfinder Comment

In my opinion, the LAR provides a detailed summary with clear identification of relevant landscape-related provisions. It identifies the regional significance of the proposal which aligns with the purpose of the FTAA, as well as considering matters under Part 2 of the RMA, particularly s6 matters of national importance (Natural Character and ONF/Ls).

In my opinion, the LAR does not integrate mana whenua policy documents or demonstrate how Kāi Tahu perspectives and mātauranga have shaped the assessment, however it is acknowledged as a shortcoming in the LAR, with consultation intended to address this.

Overall, I consider the description of statutory context and relevant policy is appropriate and suitable for consideration in decision making.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

Identification of potential issues is provided in Section 6. These cover ONFs, rural character, natural character, visual amenity and the urban development pattern of the Wakatipu Basin. This is followed by the Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects in Section 7.

Visual Effects Assessment

The assessment of landscape effects begins with visual effects in section 7.1. The LAR finds that most of the Ridgeburn Development will be visually contained by existing landform and extensive proposed planting.

The LAR argues that for people travelling on key approach routes such as Lake Hayes–Arrow Junction Highway and the Gibbston Highway, the development will generally not be visible or will appear only fleetingly and at very small scale,



producing very low to negligible effects. The development is also not visible from the relevant part of the Twin Rivers Trail due to dense vegetation and the steep scarp face.

For elevated viewpoints the development is visible in varying degrees. In these wide panoramic views, the LAR asserts that the proposal reads as an additional element within an already urbanising basin rather than a standalone new settlement. The most notable change occurs at the Crown Range lookouts, where the spread of development at the toe of Morven Hill reduces existing rural openness, resulting in moderate to moderate-high effects, particularly at night when lighting becomes more apparent.

Overall, the assessment concludes that direct visibility effects are generally nil to low, with more significant adverse visual effects arising from traffic-related changes to local road character and from the Crown Range viewing areas. Across the basin, the development is perceived as part of the broader pattern of east–west urban expansion rather than a visually intrusive outlier.

Wayfinder Comment

I consider that the visual effects assessment is well grounded in the existing environment values. It carries forward the attributes and values described earlier in the LAR and uses them as the basis for determining sensitivity, significance, and the nature of change.

The visual catchment is defined and is broadly reflected in the LAR by a set of representative viewpoints. They are justified as representative of areas that are frequented by the public and with views towards the site i.e. ‘will be seen to varying degrees’. These sites are the basis for the viewpoint analysis that follows. The LAR could be clearer that some of the viewpoints do not have views of the proposal because of the proposed mitigation measures. The LAR could also note how the effects will change over time if the mitigation requires time to establish such as for screening vegetation.

Despite the acknowledgement that visual effects are a subset of landscape effects, the LAR presents visual effects first. In my opinion it would be consistent with the methodology to describe the landscape effects of the proposal and then provide an analysis of visual effects (as a subset of perceptual effects) to support the assessment with more detail about the specific visual aspects.

Morven Ferry Road: Viewpoints 1 – 4

In my opinion analysis of viewpoints 1-4 follows a clear logic in identifying the nature and magnitude of visual effects resulting from the increase in vehicle movements. The effects rating reflects that the road is used by a small number of residents and guests and therefore the change impacts on a very small number of people. The analysis of viewpoints 1-4 provides a clear sense of the effects on Morven Ferry Road.

Arrow Junction Road: Viewpoints 5 and 6

In my opinion analysis of viewpoints 5 and 6 follows a clear logic in identifying the nature and magnitude of visual effects.

Lake Hayes-Arrow Junction Highway: Viewpoint 7

As noted above, this is one of the viewpoints included that is assessed as having no views of the proposal. This is partly a result of proposed vegetation within the site. No comment is made about any temporary effects while this vegetation establishes, or the degree to which this proposed vegetation is required specifically to mitigate effects of this viewpoint. In my opinion, this analysis could provide more detail about these matters to increase the certainty about visual effects including temporary visual effects from this viewpoint.



The Twin Rivers Cycle Trail: Viewpoints 8 - 11

As noted above, this is one of the viewpoints included that is assessed as having no views of the proposal.

Gibbston Highway: Viewpoints 12 and 13

In my opinion analysis of viewpoints 12 and 13 follows a clear logic in identifying the nature and magnitude of visual effects.

The Arrow River Bridges Trail: Viewpoints 14

Noted.

Crown Range Road: Viewpoints 15 and 16

In my opinion analysis of viewpoints 15 and 16 follows a clear logic in identifying the nature and magnitude of visual effects.

Tobin's Track – Viewpoint 17

In my opinion analysis of viewpoint 17 follows a clear logic in identifying the nature and magnitude of visual effects. However, it is not clear if the well treed landscape setting is on the proposal site or other land. It would have benefited from consideration of the time required for the establishment of proposed vegetation on the site, and how the magnitude of effects would change over time.

Coronet Peak – Viewpoint 18

In my opinion analysis of viewpoint 18 follows a clear logic in identifying the nature and magnitude of visual effects. However, it is not clear if the well treed landscape setting is on the proposal site or other land. It would have benefited from consideration of the time required for the establishment of proposed vegetation on the site, and how the magnitude of effects would change over time.

Remarkables Ski Field Access Road – Viewpoints 19 – 21

In my opinion analysis of viewpoints 19-21 follows a clear logic in identifying the nature and magnitude of visual effects.

Summary

In my opinion, the summary of visual effects in the LAR are sound and draw together the overall analysis of visual effects.

As noted at the start of this comment, I consider presenting the visual effects before the landscape effects results in over emphasis on visual over other aspects.

However, overall, I consider the detail and analysis of the visual effects is of a high standard, providing a clear description and justified assessment and rating of effects. I consider the assessment of visual effects can be relied on for decision making.



Landscape Effects Assessment

Section 7.2 undertakes a structured evaluation of how the proposed development will change the landscape values of the key landscape components affected by the project. It breaks these components into three main areas (Morven Hill, the Kawarau River corridor, and the wider Whakatipu Basin/receiving environment).

For each area, the LAR identifies the existing landscape values (such as natural character, openness, coherence, landform integrity, and associative or perceptual qualities) and then tests how the proposed urban development, revegetation, and access changes would alter those values. It distinguishes between parts of the landscape that are sensitive (like ONFs) and parts that are already modified and therefore more able to absorb change. The LAR evaluates both adverse and positive effects. For example, the loss of rural character in the Morven Ferry Triangle versus the enhancement of natural character through native revegetation on Morven Hill and the Kawarau escarpment.

The section also considers how compatible the development is with the overarching landscape patterns of the Whakatipu Basin. It looks at whether the proposal disrupts, reinforces, or extends existing landscape structure, particularly the east–west band of development along the State Highway corridor. It then synthesises effects at different spatial scales, recognising that some impacts are confined locally while others relate to broader landscape coherence.

Wayfinder Comment

As noted above, assessing the landscape effects first would have provided key context to locate the visual effects assessment within. In my opinion, this would also reduce the repetition of visual effects assessment that occurs in this section of the LAR and ensure that consideration of the values in the landscape effects assessment section is an integral part of the visual effects assessment.

Morven Hill

The LAR reasoning explicitly picks up on values identified in Section 5. Overall, in my view the LAR presents a coherent and logical assessment of the nature and magnitude of landscape effects on Morven Hill.

Kawarau River

Overall, in my view the LAR presents a coherent assessment of the nature and magnitude of landscape effects on the Kawarau River.

Whakatipu Basin

In my opinion the LAR presents a logic that can be relied upon to understand how development is progressing across the basin. Overall, in my view the LAR presents a suitable assessment of the nature and magnitude of landscape effects on the Whakatipu Basin.

Morven Ferry Triangle

In my opinion the LAR assessment of Morven Ferry Triangle lacks grounding in the identified values. It acknowledges the shift in character and notes the new form of amenity but does little to describe them. More detail of which specific rural attributes are lost or retained would strengthen this argument.

Overall, I consider the assessment of landscape effects on the Morven Ferry Triangle is light, however I recognise that the proposal constitutes quite a change in the immediate character and as such the broader effects on Whakatipu Basin are more relevant.



Assessment against relevant policy provisions

Section 8 evaluates the proposal against the relevant policy framework, focusing on how the development aligns with or departs from the objectives and policies of the Proposed District Plan. Rather than repeating the effects analysis, this section tests the earlier landscape findings against the intent of the planning provisions, particularly those relating to Outstanding Natural Features, Rural Character Landscapes, and the Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone.

The LAR works through the key policy themes such as protection of ONF values, avoidance of urban development in rural landscapes, maintenance of rural character, and management of landscape coherence, and considers whether the development is consistent, inconsistent, or partly aligned with each. It draws on the conclusions from the effects assessment (e.g., enhancement of ONF values, loss of rural character within the receiving environment, containment of landscape effects at broader scales) and maps these outcomes to the relevant strategic, landscape, and zone-specific policy directions.

The section also interprets the policy framework considering the development's characteristics, acknowledging where the proposal aligns with policy (such as enhancing natural character in ONFs) and where it does not (such as introducing urban density into Rural and WBRAZ zones). It assesses whether any inconsistencies are significant or can be balanced by positive outcomes or contextual landscape considerations.

Overall, Section 8 functions as a policy-alignment exercise, showing how the development performs when measured against the District Plan's landscape-related objectives and policies, and whether the landscape effects identified earlier sit within a policy framework that tolerates, discourages, or supports the form of change proposed.

Wayfinder Comment

I consider the analysis in Section 8 provides clear, well-reasoned, and internally consistent evaluations of the proposal against the policy provisions identified in Section 4, and it does so in a manner that is aligned with contemporary landscape assessment practice, including the principles of *Te Tangi a te Manu*. It demonstrates a sound understanding of the policy framework.

PDP - Chapter 3 Strategic Direction

In my opinion, this is a defensible and transparent assessment. Section 8 correctly identifies that the proposal conflicts with the explicit policy direction (no new urban nodes), but demonstrates alignment with functional regional growth dynamics. Importantly, the assessment does not downplay the conflict; instead, it reframes the policy intent through the lens of the Fast-track legislative purpose and the current housing shortages. This is coherent with *Te Tangi a te Manu* principles of reasoned explanation and contextual application of policy, not mechanical scoring.

PDP - Chapter 6 - Landscapes and Rural Character

I consider Section 8 provides a credible reading of Chapter 6 by directly tracing effects back to the values framework in Section 5. The LAR does not attempt to claim RCL character is maintained.

This structured honesty aligns well with *Te Tangi a te Manu* principles of:

- ▶ distinguishing landscape effects from visual containment,
- ▶ being transparent where values cannot be maintained, and
- ▶ giving weight to contextual and attribute-based reasoning.



PDP Chapter 21 – Rural

In my opinion, the LAR is proportionate and aligns with the methodology:

- ▶ It distinguishes amenity mitigation from landscape character maintenance—a distinction many assessments get wrong.
- ▶ It correctly treats rural character as attributes + values, not simply “visual openness.”
- ▶ It recognises that extensive mitigation does not cure a fundamental character shift.

PDP Chapter 24 – Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone

In my opinion, Section 8’s conclusion that the proposal “does not maintain LCU18 landscape character/amenity” is a valid conclusion for Chapter 24. The LAR avoids overstating the effect of screening or native restoration on rural-lifestyle character.

Again, this is aligned with *Te Tangi a te Manu* expectations:

- ▶ Attribute based reasoning, -based reasoning,
- ▶ clear separation of effect pathways, and
- ▶ avoiding generic claims of enhancement.

Mitigation measures

A separate section on mitigation measures is not provided in the LAR however these are included throughout. The proposal incorporates a suite of landscape-led design responses intended to avoid, reduce, and offset effects on the receiving environment and ONF/ONL values. Key mitigation includes extensive native revegetation, with 75 ha on Morven Hill and 30 ha along the Kawarau River corridor, replacing pasture and exotic weeds with continuous indigenous vegetation to enhance natural character and perceptual coherence. -led design responses intended to avoid, reduce, and offset effects on the receiving environment and ONF/ONL values. Key mitigation includes extensive native revegetation, with 75

Built form is placed back from prominent landforms, with most development located on lower terraces and hummocky terrain. The few elements on the Morven Hill ONF (seven dwellings and two water tanks) are sited in already modified paddocks or benched into the slope, finished in recessive colours, and enclosed by native planting to maintain legibility of the landform. A planted buffer along the top of the scarp face separates the urban edge from the Kawarau River ONF, retaining enclosure and the integrity of the river corridor. Boundary and interface planting around Morven Ferry Road and Arrow Junction Road provides visual screening while remaining consistent with the existing pattern of enclosure within the Morven Ferry Triangle. A planted buffer along the top of the scarp face separates the urban edge from the Kawarau River ONF, retaining enclosure and the integrity of the river corridor. Boundary and interface planting around Morven Ferry Road and Arrow Junction Road provides visual screening while remaining consistent with the existing pattern of enclosure within the Morven Ferry Triangle.

At a broader scale, the masterplan is structured to maintain key landform patterns, retain large areas of open space, and embed stormwater basins and green links as landscape features. Night-time effects are mitigated through controlled lighting design and perimeter vegetation. The project also incorporates public access to Morven Hill’s



summit, enhancing associative and recreational values, and creates a cohesive landscape framework in the east–west urban pattern of the Whakatipu Basin.

Wayfinder Comment

In my opinion, the mitigation measures in the LAR generally align well with what *Te Tangi a te Manu* anticipates. They use natural features and elements to manage effects, are integrated into the design, and tied to the physical and perceptual attributes that underpin key landscape values. The largescale native revegetation, landform responsive layout, and honest distinction between visual screening and true landscape character effects are all consistent with the emphasis on reasoned, place specific responses. The only shortcoming is cultural landscape values are not yet fully woven into the mitigation design or its long term stewardship.

Overall, the approach reflects good contemporary practice and meets most of methodology expectations, with room to strengthen specificity and cultural integration as the project progresses.

Conclusion

The LAR concludes in Section 9 that the proposal will generate a range of landscape and visual effects that vary across different parts of the receiving environment. At the local scale, the LAR finds that much of the proposed built development will be visually contained by boundary vegetation and landform, resulting in low levels of visual change for many public viewing audiences. It notes, however, that road upgrades and increased traffic will noticeably alter the character of Morven Ferry Road and Arrow Junction Road.

At a broader scale, the LAR concludes that while the proposal introduces a new node of urban development east of existing settlements, it will appear as part of the wider pattern of development across the Whakatipu Basin. From distant elevated viewpoints, the LAR identifies that the development will be perceived in the context of other urban areas, leading to low to moderate visual effects depending on location. It also acknowledges more pronounced effects from certain vantage points, such as the Crown Range Road, where the spread of development will change aspects of the rural outlook.

In relation to landscape effects, the LAR concludes that the proposed restoration planting on Morven Hill and within the Kawareau River corridor will enhance natural character and landscape values associated with these Outstanding Natural Features. In contrast, the LAR finds that the rural character of the Morven–Ferry Triangle will undergo a high degree of change, given the scale of development proposed within an area currently characterised by rural and rural-residential land uses. The LAR concludes that the proposal will not adversely affect the landscape values of Morven Hill or the Kawareau River and will provide positive outcomes through native revegetation and improved public access.

Collectively, these findings form the LAR’s overall conclusion that landscape effects range from positive to high adverse, depending on location and scale, with key Outstanding Natural Features generally maintained or enhanced through the proposed interventions.

Wayfinder Comment

In my opinion, the conclusion is defensible as it is internally consistent in identifying significant site-scale effects while concluding that wider landscape and visual effects are moderated by landform, vegetation, and mitigation. It also sets out a clear logic for finding no compromise of Outstanding Natural Feature values, based on avoidance of the Morven Hill ONF, setbacks and buffering to the Kawareau River ONF, and restoration planting to enhance naturalness. These mechanisms are credible.



Wayfinder Summary and Recommendations

In my opinion, the LAR is methodologically sound and generally well aligned with *Te Tangi a te Manu* guidance. The assessment applies an appropriate methodology, and a structured evaluation of landscape character, values, and effects. The proposal is clearly described, relevant statutory provisions are identified, and the LAR appropriately recognises the significance of Outstanding Natural Features and rural landscape values within a fast-track statutory context. The LAR is internally consistent in acknowledging high adverse effects on site-scale rural character while concluding that wider landscape and visual effects are moderated through landform containment, setbacks, and a landscape-led masterplan incorporating restoration and mitigation.

Overall, in my opinion the LAR can be relied upon for decision-making.

To assist the panel, the following questions are posed, along with a determination of whether the LAR provides sufficient information to address them:

1. To what degree will neighbouring properties (and particularly dwellings) be affected?

Neighbouring properties (especially the immediately adjoining dwellings on the eastern boundary and those with open views from Morven Ferry Road) will experience the highest levels of adverse visual and character effects, particularly in the early years before mitigation planting matures. Over time, effects reduce, but the permanent change in landscape character from rural to urban remains significant and is acknowledged in the LAR as a high adverse effect on existing rural character within the site.

2. To what degree is the proposal visible from State Highway 6 and other key routes?

The proposal has limited, if any, visibility from SH6 due to strong landform and vegetation screening, resulting in no effects from that route. Visibility elsewhere varies from very low to low from the Gibbston Highway, moderate–high initially along Morven Ferry Road (reducing to low with planting), and no visibility from Arrow Junction Road or the Twin Rivers Trail. From elevated viewpoints such as the Crown Range Road and parts of the Remarkables Road, the development is visible at long distances and generates moderate to moderate high effects, while views from Tobin’s Track and Coronet Peak result in low to very low effects overall. The LAR provides sufficient information to make this assessment.

3. How does the proposal affect natural character?

The proposal reduces natural character within the site, where urban development replaces pastoral and partially natural land. However, it maintains natural character along the Kawareau River escarpment and enhances natural character on Morven Hill and other restoration areas through largescale indigenous planting and ecological improvement. The effects on natural character are therefore mixed, with localised adverse effects but wider landscape gains where restoration efforts are concentrated. The LAR provides sufficient information to understand the effects generally.

4. To what degree does the proposal affect the relationship of Māori, their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga?

Based on the LAR, Māori associative, perceptual, and other values are not fully assessed and engagement with Kāi Tahu is yet to be completed, therefore the overall degree of effect on Māori relationships with their ancestral lands and waters remains uncertain.



5. Does the proposal maintain and/or enhance amenity values?

The proposal does not maintain existing rural amenity values, as the site undergoes a substantial and permanent shift from rural to urban character with associated reductions in openness, quietness, and rural road amenity. Amenity values are therefore not maintained in their existing form, but new amenity values are created, and some environmental amenities are enhanced, consistent with the LAR's conclusion that the development results in a high amenity residential environment while fundamentally changing the current rural one.

6. To what degree does the proposed planting mitigate the potential landscape effects?

The proposed planting provides strong mitigation of visual effects and enhances natural character through large scale restoration, but it does not and cannot fully mitigate the major landscape character change caused by urbanisation of the site. Mitigation is also time dependent, with several years of moderate–high residual effects before planting matures, and some wider landscape viewpoints remain moderately affected even long term. Planting contributes meaningfully to reducing visual prominence and improving ecological and natural character outcomes, but it does not resolve effects on rural character. Overall, the level of detail is sufficient to determine this.

Shannon Bray
Registered Fellow Landscape Architect
