

## Technical

<b>To:</b>	QLDC Resource Consent Team
<b>From:</b>	Dominic Harrison
<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, 17 December 2025
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Ayrburn Screen Hub - s53 Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 Comment Technical Memorandum – Parks and Reserves</b>

### SUMMARY

1. This memo provides comment from a Parks and Reserves perspective on the Ayrburn Screen Hub substantive application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.
2. It was prepared by Dominic Harrison.

Qualifications	I hold a Bachelor of Applied Science in Environmental Management and Botany. I have 2 years 11 months of professional experience. I have been a Parks and Reserves Planner at QLDC for 1 year where responsibilities include assessing Resource Consent applications subject to the RMA.
Code of Conduct	I confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. This technical report has been prepared in accordance with that Code. In particular, unless I state otherwise, the opinions I express are within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted to consider material facts that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

### SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

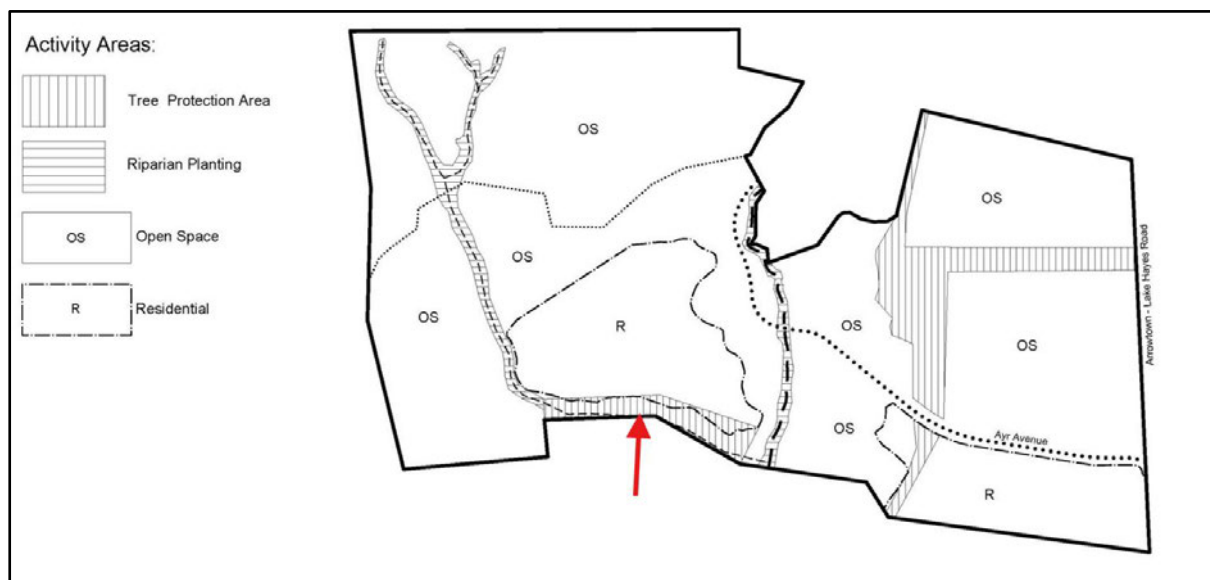
3. The applicant has applied to develop the land legally described as Lot 4 DP 540788 located at 1 Ayr Avenue adjacent to Arrowtown as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 2: Screenshot of the Project area. Source: Ayrburn Design Report "Masterplan" Page 15 attached at Appendix 7.

Figure 1: Subject site and project area. Source: Application, appendix 7.

4. The subject site is a primarily flat site with Christine's Hill rising steeply to the north and Mill Creek dissecting the site that flows to the south and feeds Lake Hayes.
5. A nine lot subdivision consent (RM240982) for the site was approved on 15 May 2025, which includes Ayrburn and the Screen Hub site. The purpose of the subdivision was to align the subdivision layout with the approved and constructed development at Ayrburn.
6. The Substantive Application states that the subdivision has not yet been given effect to.
7. The subject site is zoned under the Proposed District Plan (PDP) as Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone (WBRAZ) and is subject to the Ayrburn Structure Plan located in the Subdivision chapter of the PDP.
8. The Ayrburn Structure Plan contains several Tree Protection Areas. The relevant area for this proposal is shown in Figure 2. The majority of the trees within the Tree Protection Area are invasive conifers.

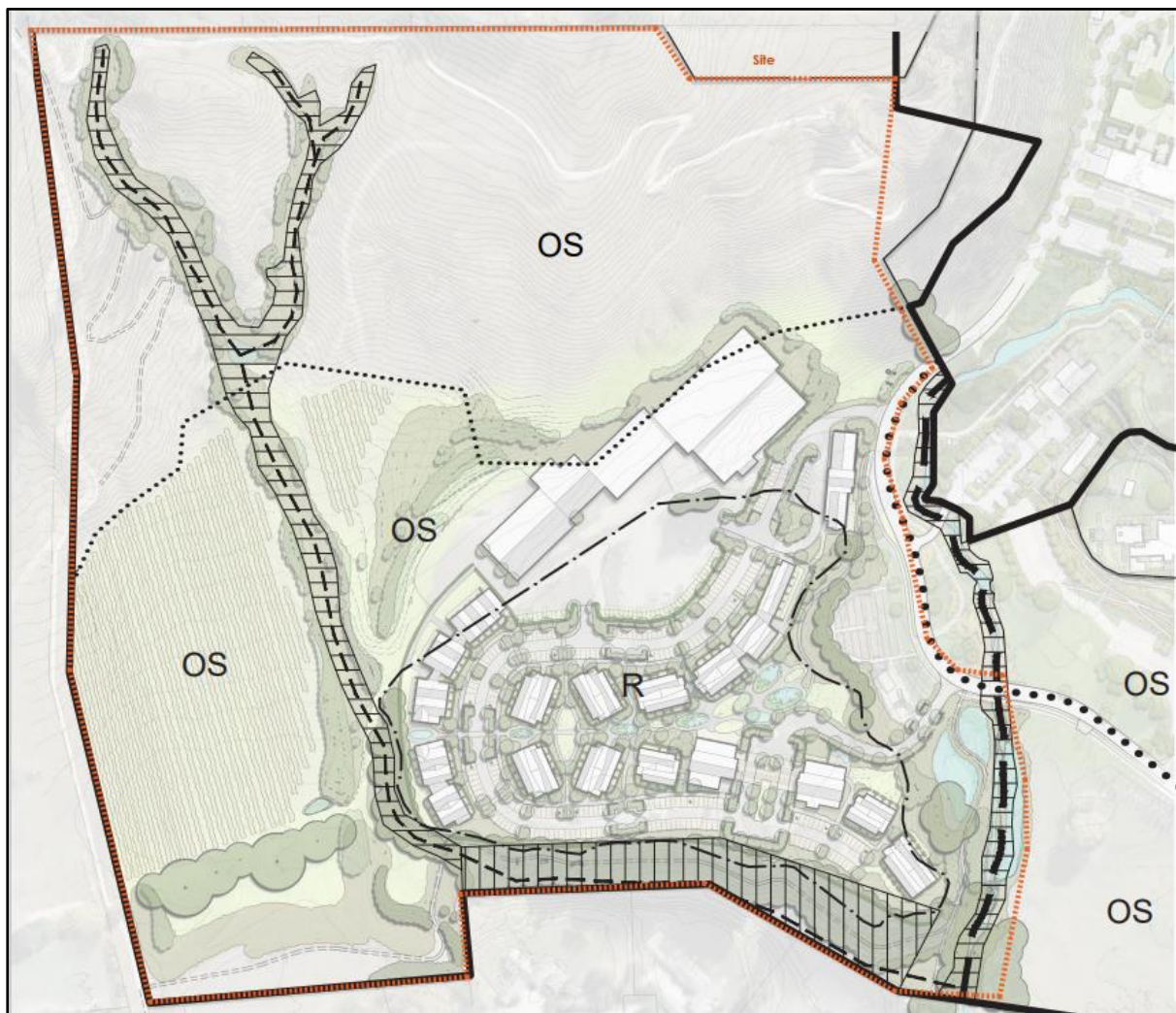


*Figure 2: Ayrburn Structure Plan. Tree Protection Area relevant to the current proposal marked by the red arrow. Source: QLDC Proposed District Plan Chapter 27.*

## PROPOSAL

9. The applicant proposes to create 'The Ayrburn Screen Hub' which is a film production facility including two studios, accommodation (201 units) and supporting facilities.
10. Whilst the accommodation is proposed to be primarily for production crews the applicant seeks to utilise the accommodation for Visitor Accommodation purposes when production crews are not using it to increase the economic viability of the project.
11. Most of the buildings are proposed to be located in the Residential Activity Area of the Ayrburn Structure Plan, however some of the larger warehouse buildings will extend into the Open Space Activity Area at the base of Christine's Hill as shown in Figure 3.





*Figure 3: Ayrburn Structure Plan with The Ayrburn Screen Hub' masterplan overlaid. Source: Application, Appendix 7, p.17.*

12. The application includes the implementation of in-stream sediment traps within Mill Creek. These are designed to allow sediment to fall out of the suspended flow of water and settle in basins which can then be excavated at appropriate intervals. Sediment traps are designed to reduce the yield of sediment reaching sensitive receptors, in this case Lake Hayes, which in turn reduces nutrient availability. This is to increase the water quality of Mill Creek and Lake Hayes.
13. The applicant has proposed riparian planting along the margins of Mill Creek to assist in improving water quality.
14. The application is not for subdivision consent, and no land is proposed to be vested to Council. Assets are proposed to be vested in QLDC which is discussed below.
15. The application proposes to provide public access easements and associated trails to enhance public access across the subject site and along the margins of Mill Creek.
16. Three trails are proposed to be created/realigned. They are identified below and shown in Figure 4:
  - i. Trail A - Lake Hayes Connection: This trail is proposed to provide a potential link from the Ayrburn trail network to potential future trails to the south of the subject site to connect through to Lake Hayes.

- ii. Trail B – Countryside to Ayrburn: This trail will provide access from the Ayrburn development and Mill Creek through to the existing Countryside Trail.
- iii. Trail C – Countryside Re-alignment: The existing upper section of the Countryside Trail is steep and provides some challenges for existing users. The re-alignment will provide a gentler incline.

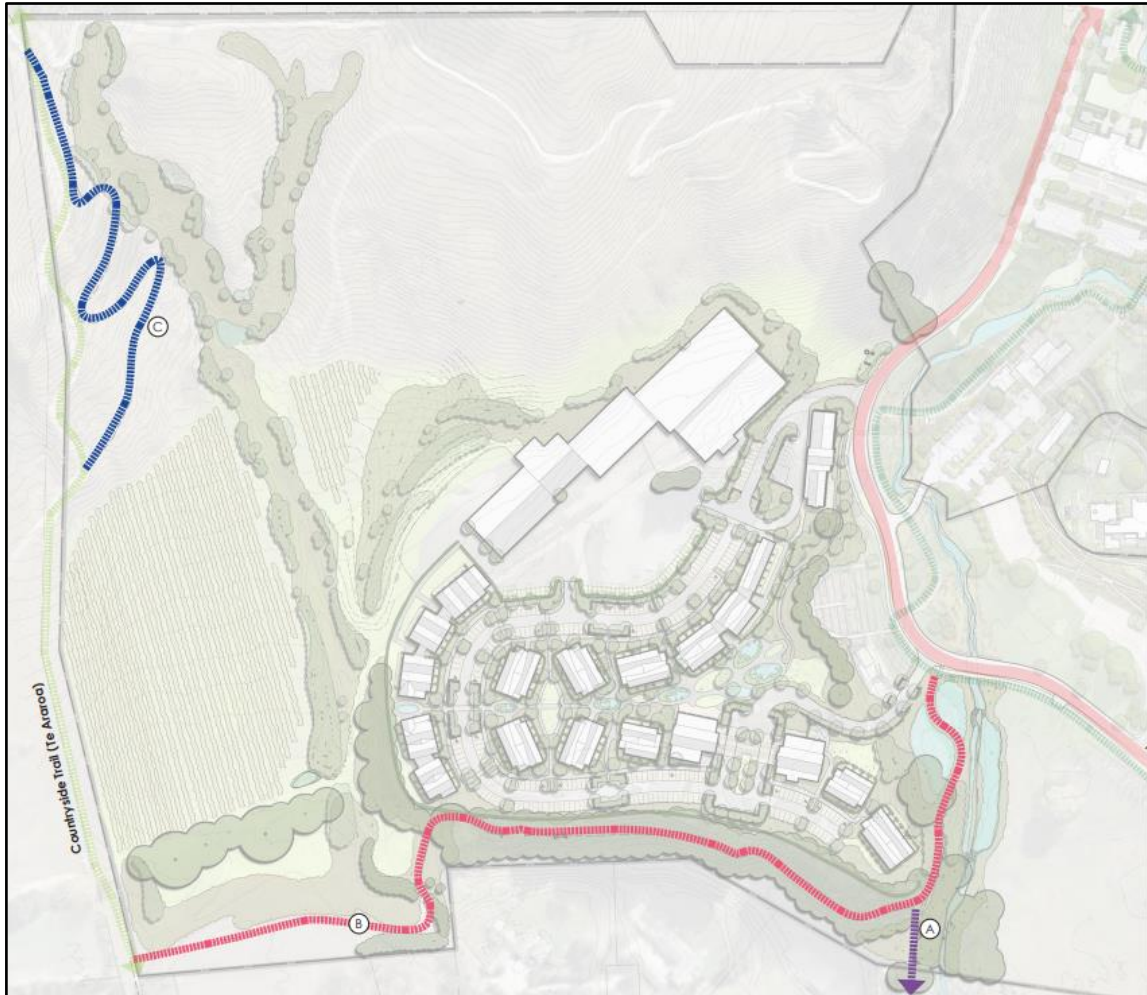


Figure 4: Trail plan showing Trail A (purple), Trail B (Red), and Trail C (Blue). Source: Application, Appendix 7, p.24.

17. The applicant proposes to retain the mature conifer trees that form the Tree Protection Area on the Ayrburn Structure Plan as they provide visual screening.

## ASSESSMENT

18. The matters relating to Parks and Reserves in this application are limited. This assessment will focus on those relevant matters that are:

- i. Trails
- ii. Biodiversity

## Trails

19. Trail A is a relatively short connection but as no land is to be vested, it will provide for future connection opportunities outside of the subject site. This connection will ensure potential future access to Lake Hayes to the south is available along the margins of Mill Creek. This will contribute to a better-connected trail network that considers the wider catchment and will be a positive outcome for the wider community.
20. Trail B will provide a logical connection from Mill Creek esplanade reserve to the existing trail network to the west (Countryside Trail). This will increase public access and connectivity to the subject site and Mill Creek. This is considered a logical alignment that will benefit the wider community and contribute to the Blue Green network positively.
21. Trail C will provide a realignment to the existing Countryside Trail. This current section of the Countryside Trail is steep and presents some complexities for some trail users. The realignment will provide a gentler grade that is easier for all users to navigate, increasing the accessibility of the trail. This is considered to be an overall positive outcome that will improve the user experience of the Countryside Trail.
22. To ensure the existing section of the trail that is to be replaced/realigned does not generate adverse effects, the applicant should be responsible for decommissioning and remediating/recontouring to match the surrounding topography. A condition of consent has been recommended at the end of this memo to ensure this is addressed.
23. All the trails are proposed to be held in public access easements. These are required to be pedestrian and cycle easements in gross in favour of QLDC as they will be QLDC owned and maintained assets. All public access easements are to be reviewed and approved by QLDC Parks and Reserves Team prior to registration and all costs associated with the registration of the public access easements should be borne by the applicant. Conditions of consent are recommended at the end of this memo, to ensure this occurs.
24. All proposed trails must be constructed in accordance with [QLDC Trail Design Standards and Specifications 2025](#). An associated condition of consent is recommended at the end of this memo to ensure appropriate standards are met.
25. To ensure Council is not burdened by any undue maintenance costs, a three year maintenance agreement should be entered into for any assets (trails) to be handed over to QLDC. A condition of consent is recommended at the end of this memo to achieve this.

## **Biodiversity**

26. The subdivision rule 27.7.32.2.c.aa that applies in the context of the Ayrburn Structure Plan supports retention of the existing conifer trees (because they are trees over 2m in height located within a TPA) in the Tree Protection Area except:

The landowner may remove some or all Trees provided that:

- the landowner has first planted replacement Trees which will achieve the same or similar visual screening effect; and
- existing evergreen Trees are replaced by evergreen Trees; and
- the replacement Trees have reached a [height](#) of 4m above [ground level](#).



27. The conifers are large Douglas fir, which are classified in the Otago Regional Council Pest Management Plan<sup>1</sup> as an invasive wilding exotic species. Rule 34.4.2 of the QLDC Proposed District Plan also prohibits the planting of Douglas fir.
28. The approved subdivision consent for the site directs the conifers (shown in Figure 5) be retained in perpetuity through a consent notice (condition 15c of RM240982) reflecting exactly the wording in rule 27.7.32.2.c.aa. This includes the ability for the consent holder to replace these trees by first planting replacement Trees which will achieve the same or similar visual screening effect.



*Figure 5: Image showing the subject site outlined in orange and the existing conifer hedge along the boundary in the foreground.*

29. Parks and Reserves understand condition 15c was put in place to mitigate the visual impacts of the Ayrburn development when viewed from adjoining properties.
30. To contribute to positive environmental outcomes, the applicant is encouraged, as part of implementing RM240982, to provide sufficient replacement planting on the landscape plan as detailed by PDP rule 27.7.32.2.c.aa and Condition 15(c) RM240982. As these trees provide a screening currently to this development, implementing replacement planting sooner rather than later would allow the conifer hedge to be removed in the future at such a time the replacement planting reaches a height of 4m with no requirement for a variation to any consent.
31. This would be considered a positive environmental outcome that would support the other actions such as native planting and water quality enhancement the applicant is undertaking on the subject site.

#### **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:**

32. Based on the preceding assessment, conditions of consent are recommended and should be applied upon any grant of consent.
- X.** Prior to the commencement of any works under this consent on the site, the consent holder shall provide a detailed landscape plan (including design specifications) by a suitably qualified Landscape Architect to be certified by the Queenstown Lakes

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<sup>1</sup> [Regional Pest Management Plan.](#)

District Council's Parks & Open Spaces Planning Manager. The final landscape plan shall achieve the following:

- a. All works shall meet Part 7 – Landscape, of QLDC's Land Development and Subdivision Code of Practice (dated 2025) and subsequent amendments to that document up to the date of issue of any resource consent;

*Note: This applies to the trails and any planting within the easement area only. The current standards are available on Council's website via the following link:*

*<https://www.qldc.govt.nz/media/3yyc4fzi/2020-qldc-land-development-and-subdivision-code-of-practice.pdf>*

- b. Path width, material and construction details so that all tracks achieve a minimum grade 2 standard as set out in Appendix J *Trail Design Standards & Specifications – 2025* of the QLDC Subdivision and Land Development Code of Practice 2025..  
*<https://www.qldc.govt.nz/media/cglfzr5c/qldc-trail-design-standards-and-specifications-02-july-2025.pdf>*

*Note: Pathways with a hard sealed surface such as asphalt shall be no less than 2.2 metres in width – case specific.*

- c. All planting within any public access easement.

*Note: No works may be undertaken on the site until the plan has been certified.*

- XI. The consent holder shall enter into a maintenance agreement for the trails and any planting within the easement areas under s207A of the Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Act (LGA) as per clause 7.4.11.2 of the QLDC LDSCoP 2025, with the QLDC Parks and Reserves Department, with the obligation being upon the consent holder to fulfil the requirements detailed in (a) to (e) below. The maintenance period shall be three (3) years from any issue of 224(c):

- a. All new assets, including trails, irrigation and fencing, shall be kept in good working order and be free of defects or disrepair;
- b. Trees and vegetation within the public access easements shall be irrigated and maintained to an acceptable standard as specified by QLDC Parks and Reserves Planning team. It shall be the responsibility of the consent holder to ensure that any new plantings, as shown on the approved landscape plans, that die or decline at any time over the three (3) year maintenance period following the initial planting shall be replaced. The replacement plants shall be of the same species, grade and size as the original specimens and planted no later than the following planting season or as instructed by QLDC;
- c. The public access easement areas shall be kept in a tidy condition and shall be free of litter and refuse;
- e. On completion of construction, asbuilts for walkways (and grassed areas if any), which are to be vested with Council, to be provided as per Land Development and Subdivision Code of Practice (dated 2025).

*Advice Note: Asbuilt submission package, including asbuilt specs and guidelines, available on the QLDC LDSCoP 2025 website:*




*<https://www.qldc.govt.nz/services/resource-consents/land-developments-and-subdivisions>*



- XII.** Access and maintenance works easements must be secured over the pedestrian and cycle trails identified as Trail, A, B, and C. These shall be Right of Way easements in gross in favour of QLDC. The easement agreements must be approved by the Parks and Open Spaces Planning Manager prior to registration.

*Note: The Grantor bears all reasonable costs associated with the registration and/or alteration of the easement, including legal, survey and registration costs.*

- XIII.** The consent holder must remediate/decommission the existing section of the Countryside Trail that is being realigned within 3 months of the new trail being completed. This will include recontouring to match the surrounding landform.

Prepared by:	Reviewed by:	Reviewed and Authorised by:
		
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28 November 2025	1 December 2025	1 December 2025