



<b>To:</b>	Lauren Christie, General Manager – Queenstown, Winton on behalf of Waterfall Park Developments Limited
<b>From:</b>	Robin Miller, Director/Registered Building Surveyor
<b>Project Name:</b>	Ayrburn Screen Hub Fast Track application
<b>Date:</b>	09 January 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Heritage expert response to heritage matters raised in the Rebecca Hadley comments received as part of the Fast Track application

## Introduction

This report has been prepared for Waterfall Park Developments Limited in relation to the Fast Track application for the development of a Screen Hub on land to the southwest of the heritage buildings at Ayrburn Domain. These buildings, known as Ayrburn Homestead and Stone Farm Buildings are a Category 2 listed heritage feature (ref. no: 110) in the Queenstown Lakes District Proposed District Plan (PDP).

I have been asked to respond to the heritage comments made by Rebecca Hadley of 509 Speargrass Flat Road. Specifically, these are:

### Comment 1 (page 4)

With regard to the Masterplan review by Mr Barratt-Boyes, Rebecca Hadley comments that:

“.....he [Mr Barret-Boyes] does not discuss how the development will degrade the heritage values of the existing cluster of heritage buildings at the Ayrburn hospitality precinct by removing the open rural character that surrounds them.”

### Comment 2 (page 7)

“Discussion of adverse effects”

“Heritage values

The heritage values of the existing Ayrburn farm buildings will also be reduced as the cluster of buildings will no longer be a cluster but a sprawl. The legibility of the settlement pattern will be lost by locating another “cluster” adjacent to the existing buildings. It therefore raises the question of whether the applicant really wants to locate an industrial activity next to his upmarket hospitality precinct? It is more likely that the film making activity will be dropped and replaced with accommodation or high density residential subdivision. The proposed SH will change the permitted baseline to make it easier for a higher density of residential or accommodation activity to be permitted in future applications.”

### Comment 3 (page 12)

“Peer review of applicant’s landscape assessment”

“The Peer review also neglects to understand that the existing cluster of heritage buildings that is the hospitality precinct will lose historic values due to the loss of open space surrounding it.”

In responding to these comments, I confirm that I have read and agree to abide by the Environment Court of New Zealand's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses Practice Note 2023. Where this report relies on information provided by other experts, this is outlined within the report.

### **Qualifications and Experience**

My area of expertise is heritage – my qualifications and experience are set out in my attached CV.

With regard to my knowledge and experience of the historic Ayrburn homestead and farm buildings, I first visited them around 15 years ago. In the last 8 years or so, I have provided heritage advice to the building owners in all stages of the development of the historic precinct, including for Resource Consent/heritage impact assessment purposes, physical repair of the buildings, and protection of their heritage values during development/construction works.

### **Response to the comments**

There are many aspects to the concept of heritage value/heritage significance. The Queenstown Lakes District Proposed District Plan (PDP) identifies these in Section 26.6.1 and refers to them as 'evaluation criteria'. They are:

- Historic and social value
- Cultural and spiritual value
- Architectural value
- Townscape and context value (sometimes referred to as landmark value)
- Rarity and representative value
- Technological value
- Archaeological value

There is no formal Queenstown Lakes District Council heritage values assessment for Ayrburn Homestead and Stone Farm Buildings. The heritage values were, however, defined in a Conservation Plan written by Jackie Gillies (Heritage Architect – now retired), formerly of Origin Heritage, in 2017. These identified values have formed the basis of the various Resource Consent applications granted at Ayrburn Domain since 2018.

In brief summary, the Conservation Plan considered that the group of Category 2 buildings at Ayrburn Farm (including the stone Stables, Cart Shed, Dairy and timber Homestead) have high heritage significance as an intact and rare example of an early and highly successful farm established during the early settlement of the Wakatipu Basin. The later addition of a substantial timber Homestead in the late 19th century demonstrates the prosperity of the original owners, the Paterson family, and is architecturally significant for its unusual scale, idiosyncratic layout, and exceptionally intact original fabric. The farm buildings are strong examples of local vernacular architecture, with stone construction and agricultural forms that contribute to their architectural value, particularly the Stables and Cart Shed arranged around a central courtyard. The place has archaeological significance as evidence of early colonial farming, social significance reflecting Paterson's status within the district, and technological significance through innovative early building techniques and the early adoption of electricity generated on site. A more detailed assessment of these values, copied from the Conservation Plan, is reproduced in the attached Appendix A at the end of this report.

In addition, the 2017 Conservation Plan acknowledged that the buildings have significance as a 'group', due to their unity of scale, materials, function and location of the buildings within a roughly rectangular farmyard. They would have been the natural focus of the early farm, protected by the topography of the site, with a steep bank to the south and contained on the north side by Mill Creek.

The heritage comments of Rebecca Hadley seem to be directed primarily towards the 'townscape and contextual value' and 'architectural value' of the group ('cluster') of listed heritage buildings (for definitions of these values, please refer to the PDP Chapter 26, Section 26.6.1). In respect of these values, the Conservation Plan established:

- a. The key view of the listed heritage buildings is that of the homestead and its tree-lined avenue as seen from McEntyre's Hill.
- b. The importance of the buildings continuing to be seen as a 'group'.
- c. The setting of the farm buildings is the localised area within which they stand and includes the open space between the Cart Shed, the Dairy and the Stable.

Accordingly, the Conservation Plan did not consider the heritage value of the buildings as including the much wider landscape that lies to their south and west.

It is this relationship between the buildings and their wider south and west landscape areas that Ms. Hadley feels would be negatively impacted by the proposed Screen Hub development. This is the common theme of her three heritage comments.

My response to these comments is as follows:

1. The effect of the proposal on the heritage buildings as a cluster

The heritage value/significance of the listed farm buildings as a group has been clearly identified and relates to the proximity of the buildings to one another, their collective unity of scale, materiality, historic function and their spatial relationship to the farmyard. The proposed Screen Hub development is located on the western side of Mill Creek, across Ayr Avenue, and is physically and visually separated from the heritage group by distance, carparking, and established planting. The development remains distinct in use, scale and form and makes no attempt to integrate into or extend the historic cluster. As such, it does not dilute or fragment the legibility of the heritage group, which remains clearly readable as a coherent ensemble.

Furthermore, the Conservation Plan identified that the critical spatial component of the heritage group is the open space between the three principal buildings, forming a rough rectangular farmyard that was essential to their historic operation. The Plan recommended that no new structures should be introduced to this setting. The Plan also anticipated a desire for additional buildings or built forms and considered these could be appropriately located to the southwest or northwest. Therefore, as the proposed development does not introduce any new structures to the farmyard, or compromise the identified primary spatial relationships, it does not undermine the heritage values associated with the group/cluster.

2. The effect on the rural setting of the heritage buildings

With regard to the surrounding rural character of the area to the south and west, this is closely tied to the historic agricultural use of the land rather than being an intrinsic heritage value in its own right as far as the historic farm buildings are concerned. The original Resource Consent (RM180584) recognised that the site is no longer economically viable as a farm and that the change of use of the farm buildings and the surrounding development that was proposed created a positive, adaptive new use for them that would provide a sustainable future for the buildings. Adaptive re-use of heritage sites creates new purpose and value, reduces the risk of neglect, and often enables ongoing care and maintenance as well as greater public engagement (particularly with heritage structures such as these that have become redundant and disused). While the broader setting will evolve, the immediate heritage setting as defined by the Conservation Plan – particularly the relationship between the buildings and the farmyard – is retained.

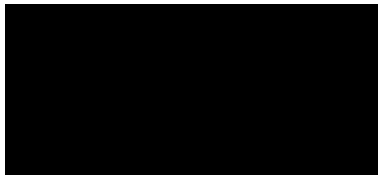
In my view, the proposed development does not degrade the heritage values of the Ayrburn Homestead and Stone Farm Buildings. Instead, by maintaining clear separation and supporting the appropriate adaptive reuse of the site, it achieves a balanced outcome that allows the heritage group to remain legible and valued within an evolving landscape.

Finally, with regard to the setting, the PDP contains a rule (26.5.9) relating to 'development within the setting or extent of place of a listed heritage feature'. However, it is important to note that the proposed Screen Hub would not trigger this rule. The reason for this is that the PDP definitions of 'setting' and 'extent of place' (see Appendix B at the rear of this report) both restrict the areas that can be considered as the setting or extent of

place of a listed heritage feature to being contained within the same legal title as the feature. In the case of the proposed Screen Hub, it lies within a different legal title to the Ayrburn Homestead and Stone Farm Buildings.

In summary:

- The open rural character that surrounds the historic buildings has not been identified by heritage professionals as being an essential element of their heritage value/significance. Accordingly changes to that open rural character should not be seen as causing degradation.
- From a heritage perspective, the proposed location of the Screen Hub is considered to be sufficiently far away that the legibility of the heritage buildings and their group value will not be lost.
- The heritage values of the adaptively reused farm buildings, now a hospitality precinct and public space, will not be eroded by loss of open space to the South and West.
- Overall, from a heritage conservation perspective, the proposed screen hub use of the land to the south and west of the historic buildings will continue the development of the historic Ayrburn Farm as it adapts to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> century industries of the Wakatipu Basin, now that agricultural is no longer a viable alternative to support these key local heritage buildings.



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**For and on behalf of Origin Consultants Ltd**

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## **Appendix A – Heritage Values Assessment (Assessment copied from the 2017 Conservation Plan)**

### **Historical Significance**

The stone buildings, including the Stables, Cart Shed, Dairy and Homestead, have high historical significance due to their construction at an early period of the settlement of the Wakatipu Basin and as one of the earliest and most successful farms in the district. The intact nature of the group is rare and contributes to its high historical significance. The addition of the substantial timber Homestead to the group towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century adds to the historical significance of the property as a demonstration of the success of the farm since its establishment.

### **Architectural Significance**

The second Homestead has architectural significance due to its scale and design. While large timber villas may have been common in the big cities these were rare in the Wakatipu district. Only one other house of similar style and scale is known. The layout of the Homestead differs considerably to that of a typical villa which tend to follow a pattern of centralised access with rooms off. The layout of Ayrburn Homestead is more idiosyncratic and appears to have developed from the particular needs of the Paterson family at the time. It also has high architectural significance due to its unmodified state, complete with original finishes, fabric and form. The existence of the range of outhouses in their original form adds to its architectural significance as they add to an understanding of how such a household functioned at the turn of the century.

The architectural significance of the farm buildings derive from their construction in the local vernacular style, with stacked stone walls, corrugated iron pitched roofs and timber structure. The proportions and layout also derive from their vernacular and agricultural origins. The Stable building has very high architectural significance due to its scale and strong form. Similarly, the Cart Shed has very pleasing proportions and lines and nestles well into the hill behind it.

### **Aesthetic Significance**

The second Homestead has aesthetic significance due to its imposing design at the head of the mature avenue of trees. Its detailing and, in particular, the bay window designs with linking verandahs contribute to its overall aesthetic significance. Primary interior spaces such as the entrance hall and the “corner” rooms are well proportioned and detailed with quality materials and provide a grand aesthetic. The farm buildings have a high degree of aesthetic significance, providing a pleasing experience of old and weathered stone buildings grouped around an open courtyard. The Cart Shed and Stables in particular are dramatic and are aesthetically powerful building forms.

### **Archaeological significance**

The buildings have archaeological significance being constructed at an early period of New Zealand’s colonial history, and the buildings and the site are likely to provide archaeological evidence of this early period.

### **Social Significance**

The scale and design of the second Homestead reflects the social significance of Paterson’s success after many years of hard work and development of the farm. The selection of the farm as the venue for the first A & P Show in the District reflects the high social standing that Paterson had achieved at the end of his life.

### **Technological Value**

Some of the building techniques and fittings displayed in the second Homestead are most unusual and technically highly significant. The use of a bitumised building wrap on the interior face of the exterior walls is significantly ahead of its time and has not been encountered elsewhere on similar buildings, either in the district or further afield. Similarly, the installation of electricity to light the house early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century predated when electric mains was brought to Arrowtown and its use was only possible due to the installation of the water powered dynamo by Robert Paterson in 1910. The farm buildings have moderate technological significance due

to the use of the traditional stone masonry, and the remaining timber shingled roof of the Cart Shed and stone Homestead.

## **Appendix B – QLDC PDP Definitions**

### **1. Setting**

(For the purpose of Chapter 26 only)

Means the area around and/or adjacent to a heritage feature listed under the Inventory of Listed Heritage Features in Section 26.8 and defined under 26.8.1, which is integral to its function, meaning, and relationships, and which is contained in the same legal title as the heritage feature listed on the Inventory of Listed Heritage Features.

(Refer also to the definition of 'Extent of Place').

### **2. Extent of Place**

(For the purpose of Chapter 26 only)

Means the area around and/or adjacent to a heritage feature listed in the Inventory of Listed Heritage Features under Section 26.8 and which is contained in the same legal title as a heritage feature listed in the Inventory, the extent of which is identified in Section 26.8.1.

(Refer also to the definition of Setting).



## ROBIN MILLER

Director  
Registered Building Surveyor

### QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Bachelor of Science (Urban Estate Management), 1986

Post-Graduate Diploma in Building Conservation (Heritage Conservation), 2004

RICS-Certified Historic Buildings Professional, 2009

NZ National Diploma in Architectural Technology, 2017

LBP (Design Level II), 2017

Site Safe Leadership in Safety, 2017

### AFFILIATIONS

Member of ICOMOS (NZ)

Full Member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation, 2006

Professional Associate of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, 1990

Registered Member of the NZ Institute of Building Surveyors, 2017



## BACKGROUND

Robin is the founding Director of Origin Consultants, and a Chartered and Registered Building Surveyor and Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Certified Historic Building Professional. He is also a Licensed Building Practitioner (Design Level II). Robin is a member of ICOMOS New Zealand and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (UK). Robin's day-to-day work involves heritage resource consent matters, condition and maintenance surveys, building pathology, specification writing, contract administration, site supervision, conservation plans, and heritage assessments. Over the years, he has worked on a wide variety of buildings from civic structures and museums to residential dwellings, farm buildings, churches and chapels, universities, archaeological sites, monuments, castles, and ruins.

Robin worked on the recently completed restoration, seismic-strengthening and refurbishment of the Lakes District Museum in Arrowtown. He is also involved in similar projects in Queenstown, Oamaru, and Dunedin, including St Paul's Cathedral and Cargill's Castle in Dunedin.

## KEY SKILLS

### Technical skills

- Experience in preparing the heritage provisions of local District Plans, including writing parts of chapter 26 (the heritage provisions of the QLDC Proposed District Plan).
- Provision of peer review services in connection with resource consent applications and heritage expert services in hearings.
- Conservation management planning – conservation plans, heritage assessments, and heritage impact assessments.
- Preparation of resource and Building Consent drawings and preparation of applications.
- Site supervision of repair/construction works in the historic environment and compliance with contract documents.
- Preparation of historic building condition assessments and schedules of repairs/specifications.
- Advice on traditional building materials and methods of construction, including traditional brick, stone, and concrete structures.

### Managerial skills

- Leadership and management skills as the director in charge of a multi-disciplinary heritage conservation practice covering heritage planning, liaison with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, conservation, architecture, and archaeology.
- Strong background in management of Otago heritage projects, such as the Clyde Museum's Feasibility Study and the Dunedin Town Hall.
- Existing long-term relationships with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and heritage specialists at Dunedin City Council, Central Otago District Council, Invercargill City Council, Waitaki District Council, and Queenstown Lakes District Council.