

Comment on Mount Iron Junction Fast-Track Application

Pete Barham & Lisa McFarlane



We can receive emails and the email address is correct.

We have lived in Wanaka for 12 years and currently own and occupy property near the Mount Iron Junction site. Pete is a self-employed architectural designer, working primarily on residential projects in Wanaka and surrounding areas.

The original development was approved prior to our purchase of the property, and we were comfortable with the scale of that development, we have reservations about the new development proposal for this site.

Having had only four weeks to review the voluminous application, we have the following comments to make –

1. Traffic volume - specifically parking

We are concerned about the additional load created within and around the development site by the 263 (approx.) residential units. We have read the Carriageway Consulting Internal Transport report (Appendix K), specifically clause 6.4.

While logical, we are concerned with the below assumptions –

- While the numbers of vehicles per house are based on 2023 census data, we are concerned that with increased construction costs and lack of housing supply there will be more people/vehicles on the site than expected, this change of lifestyle has been observed through friends of ours and through projects we have completed. i.e. people are looking to accommodate flatmates more regularly, as a way to manage mortgage costs.
Example 1 – A two bedroom unit housing two singles, with their own vehicles. There are 134 two bedroom units with only one parking space.
Example 2 – A three bedroom unit housing a couple with two flatmates, all with their own vehicles. There are 70 three bedroom units with two spaces allocated
While these two examples (and myriad others) have been accounted for in the application (40.2% and 4.7% respectively) we are concerned that these percentages used should be weighted more towards higher vehicle ownership.
- We disagree with the comment in clause 6.4.9. *'it can therefore be expected that a high proportion of residents will use their garage for parking their vehicle rather than for storage, hobbies or other (non-vehicular) purpose.'* We disagree with this in general, garages are often considered a multi-use or storage space, especially in smaller homes. Additionally in Wanaka we believe this even more so as outdoor recreation is a valued activity for many people living in Wanaka, and these units have no other storage space for bikes, kayaks, gym equipment, gardening equipment, drying racks etc.
In discussion with friends who live in an area of similar density, they were unaware of anyone who parks in their garage nearby. Due to the smaller sized houses with minimal storage, garages are generally full of stuff and not used for vehicles. They also noted that vehicle congestion is heavy outside of work hours and in the weekend, due to the lack of garage parking, but also large utes and SUVs taking up a lot of space.

Through looking into this concern we found a study (The environmental impact of the way residential parking facilities are used in New Zealand by Brenda Vale and Iman Khajehzadeh in 2016) where respondents were asked where they usually park, 50.6% of people with a single garage do not park in their garage (page 7).

The garages appear small, noted at 17.3m² generally, or 20.89m² when a laundry is included. These are not dimensioned but it is assumed to be approximately 5.5x3.2m. Large utes are common in Wanaka these days. Ford Rangers and Toyota Hilux's are both over 5.3m (without a tow bar). It is reasonable to assume owners of these vehicles will not park in these garages. For these reasons we believe a large proportion of the garages should be removed from the minimum parking provisions.

- We also disagree with the assumption that people will conveniently park a car in the garage and a car on the apron. In practice this type of vehicle stacking results in a regular need for one person to move their vehicle for the other to exit the property, over time this inconvenience will result in people avoiding this situation and parking in other parking areas. This is another reason we believe a large proportion of the garages should be removed from the minimum parking provisions.

Our concern from the above points is that residents of Mount Iron Junction will park in the surrounding areas. Areas which aren't designed for substantial on street parking – Albert Town Lake Hawea Road, Wanaka Luggate Highway, Head Place, Balneaves Lane, the North end of Riverbank Road and beyond.

This will lead to parking congestion and additional pedestrian usage of the roads (highways) surrounding the site, creating a safety issue.

Speaking of Head Place specifically, it is a narrow winding road that is difficult to navigate when vehicles are parked on the road. Resident children and their friends play on this cul de sac regularly. This valuable amenity would be lost and a safety issue created with the possible increased on-street parking from residents of Mount Iron Junction.

Remedy

- An increase in parking available within the Mount Iron Junction site, at least in proportion to the number of garages for the reasons discussed above.
- Alternatively a reduction in unit numbers, allowing for a greater proportion of parking spaces per unit.
- 'No Parking' lines where appropriate in the surrounding areas.

Note we believe any reduction in parking space numbers within the Mount Iron Junction site would be detrimental.

2. Traffic volume - Congestion on Albert Town Lake Hawea Road

We live on Head Place, which accesses the Albert Town Lake Hawea Road opposite the Mount Iron Junction Site. When turning into Head Place from the roundabout, we often have to wait for vehicles driving south from Albert Town before we can turn into Head Place. Currently this is of no concern as there is an informal passing space between the road and the Mount Iron Junction site, for northbound vehicles to pass.

Our concern with overcrowding of vehicles (as mentioned above) is that vehicles will park in this informal passing space, leading to northbound vehicles backing up behind us while we wait to turn in, congesting the roundabout. The issue isn't new vehicle movements created, but existing vehicles being delayed due to additional parking demand spilling beyond the development site, affecting already tight access to Head Place.

Note there are 10 lots on head place with only 5 lots occupied currently, so this issue will increase as more homes are built.

This issue applies to the access to Balneaves Lane also.

See **Figure 1** attached for visual description of our concern.

Remedy

- Formalising this passing area or adding yellow 'No Parking' lines.

3. Light Pollution

We enjoy the dark sky in this area. We are concerned that the increase in light pollution from Mount Iron Junction will reduce the clear night sky. We agree with the provisions of draft condition 37 and do not want these reduced in any manner.

We would like clarity on draft condition 37.c. – Does this mean all lighting that is not on buildings will be 1m or lower (bollard type lights) and therefore there would be no lamp posts throughout the Mount Iron Junction Development? If so, we support this condition.

4. General density increase

We are surprised to see the density proposed in the current application.

- This site and surrounding area is zoned rural/rural residential/large lot residential so this development would be a substantial change from what was anticipated prior to the original application, the intent of the original application and what is established in the surrounding area.
- The original application had, and the surrounding area has, a significant landscape buffer to roads, which appears greatly reduced in the proposed development. This will result in a considerable change in character with residential units, roading and lighting all closer to the boundaries of the site.
- The original application had a wide buffer to the houses on Old Racecourse Road (Lot 3 DP 359869), this lot has now been included in the development, with housing 1.74m off the boundary to Large Lot Residential Land. This seems to fully disregard the setback standards in the district plan.
- The building height for Apartment Blocks 22 & 33 (10m as noted on Appendix C1 sheet A1.62) represents a substantial increase in built form compared to the surrounding environment. Given the location adjacent to major public roads (and minimal landscaping between) these buildings are likely to become dominant visual elements in this area. This is at odds with what would be expected in a rural area, as evidenced in the surrounding environment.
- Blocks 3 & 4 are also significant in height (8.99m as noted on Appendix C sheet A1.14) and very close to the Wanaka Luggate Highway, again at odds with the surrounding environment.

See **Figure 2** attached for referenced areas of minimal planting.

Remedies

- **Further assessment** - We note no height markers are present on site for any of the development, it would be useful to see height markers for at least blocks 3, 4, 22 & 33. This would help assess concerns around the height and position of these larger blocks.
- Enforcing rural setbacks to the roads (20m) to retain the rural character of the area.
- Enforcing maximum building height (8m) to reduce the visual impact of the development, especially where close to the roads.
- Enforcing rural setbacks to the internal boundary with Old Racecourse Road properties (15m), or at a minimum provide Large Lot Residential A setbacks (4m) as that is the zoning of those neighbouring properties.
- Adding increased planting between the development and the surrounding roads to minimise the visual impact of the development.

5. Cumulative effects/Conclusion

While individual buildings could be accepted in isolation, the cumulative effect of the substantial increase in dwelling numbers, reduced setbacks/landscaping buffer and the height of buildings will result in a detrimental visual outcome compared to the previously approved development and we don't consider it appropriate within the surrounding environment.

We believe development of this site is worth pursuing and the previously consented development appeared appropriate.

We believe this development requires increased parking provisions within the site, a reduced scale to the larger buildings and an increase landscaping buffer to the surrounding environment.

Thank you.

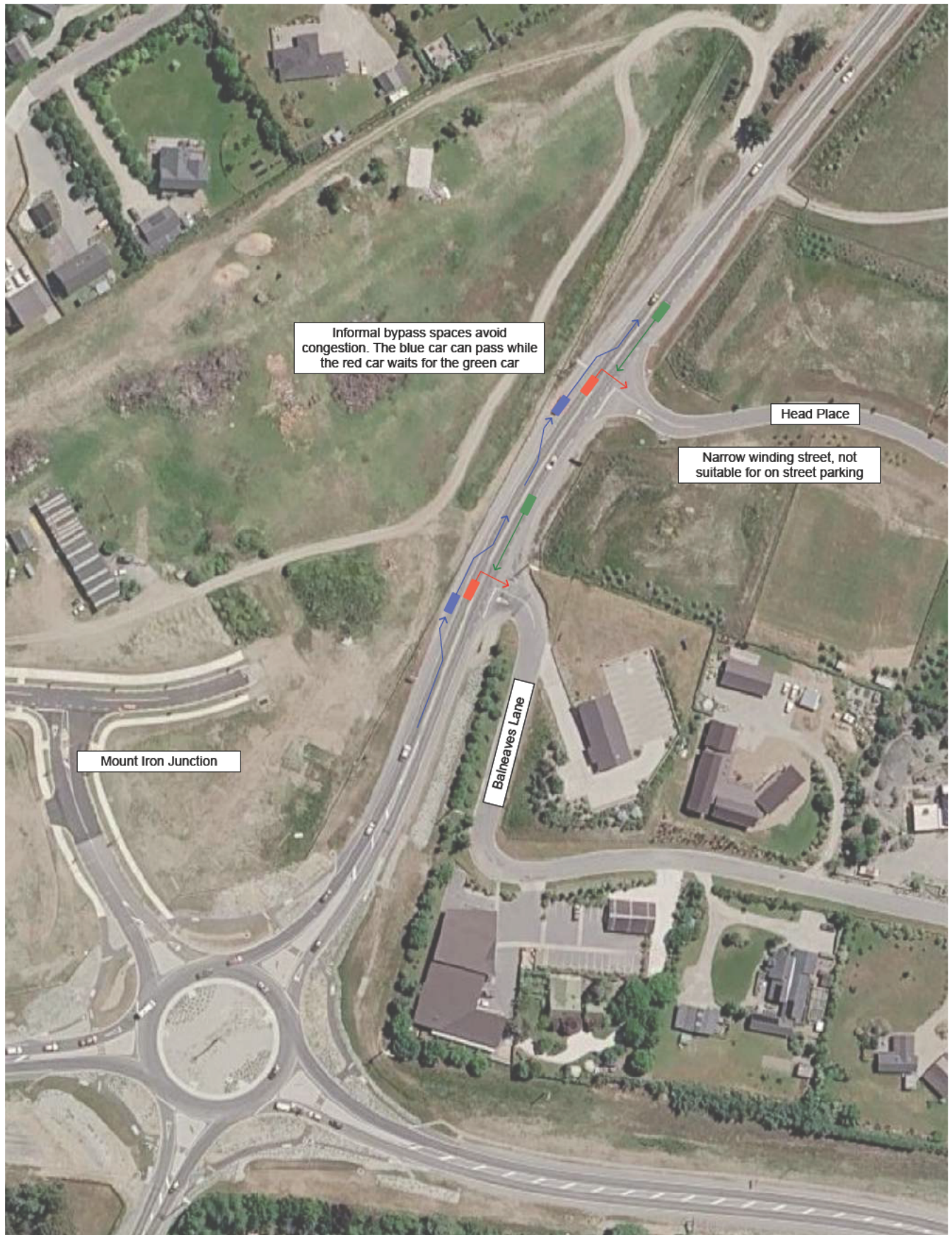


Figure 1 - Section of highway showing informal passing areas
(Image from Google Maps)

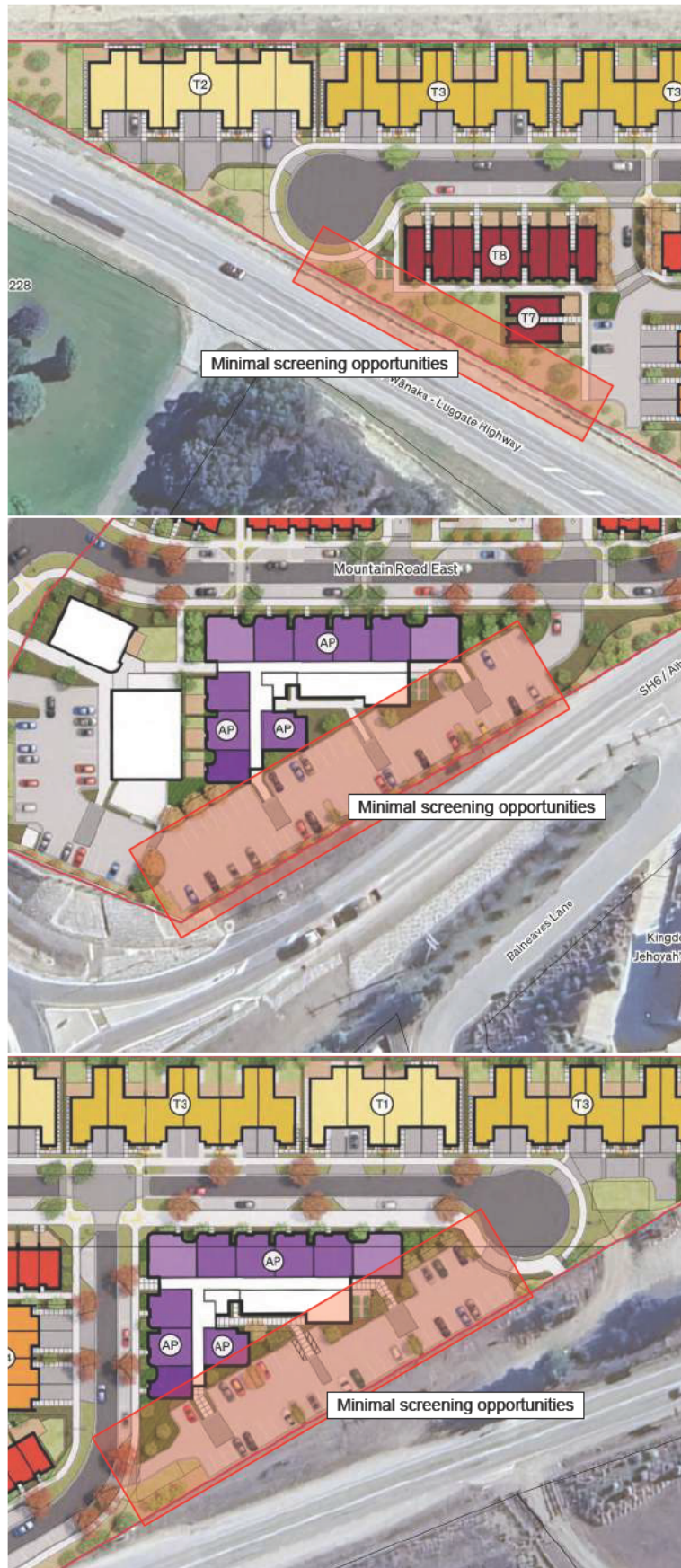


Figure 2 - Areas with minimal planting to screen larger buildings
(Images from Appendix D3 pages 10 & 11)