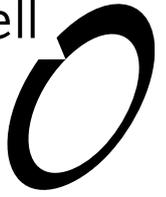


Boffa Miskell



# The Hills Resort Zone

Landscape/ Visual Assessment Plan Change  
Prepared for Boxer Hill Trust

9 May 2025





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# 1.0 Background

Boffa Miskell Limited (BML) has been engaged to prepare a landscape and visual assessment of the proposed changes to the Hills Resort Zone.

The Hills Resort Zone (HRZ) and related structure plan cover the approximately 162ha site currently occupied by The Hills golf course near Arrowtown. The zone was confirmed by the Environment Court in 2021 following an appeal on the Proposed District Plan (Stage 2). The appeal was resolved by agreement with the Queenstown Lakes District Council.

This assessment addresses the potential effects of proposed amendments to the approved HRZ Structure Plan which includes a number of amendments to the Activity Areas shown on the Structure Plan, as well as amendments to some of the related zone provisions. The location and extent the HRZ as shown on the Structure Plan is not proposed to change.

Two separate parcels of land are also owned by the Hills, adjacent to McDonnell Road and Hogans Gully Road, that are not affected by this proposed Plan Change.

The proposed HRZ Plan Change is required to assist with implementation of the zone and golf-course re-routing to optimise the design.

The purpose of this assessment is to assess the landscape effects, including the visual effects, of the proposed changes to the HRZ, including the layout of individual Activity Areas shown on the Structure Plan. BML was consulted during the formulation of and provided advice on the proposed Structure Plan changes. Where the potential for adverse landscape/visual effects was identified throughout the design process, BML made recommendations on how those effects could be mitigated. Generally, these recommendations have been adopted and form part of the proposal. It is noted that throughout the District Plan Review (DPR) process BML also provided advice on these issues during the formulation of the existing structure plan and associated HRZ rules, including in respect to building location, colours and materials, and landscaping to ensure that any potential landscape and visual effects would be minimised. In this assessment, the adequacy of the existing (where these will be retained and are relevant) and proposed mitigation measures are also considered.

This assessment is based on the proposed amendments to the Structure Plan for the HRZ (see graphic attachment Figure 2) and the Design Concepts prepared by RBT landscape architects.

In the course of assessing and providing advice on this proposal, several site visits have been undertaken. These have resulted in the refinement of the proposed Activity Area amendments and new homesite locations, which are required to accommodate the planned golf course re-alignment. A site visit was undertaken together with QLDC representatives on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024 to assess the potential landscape effects and the visibility of the proposal in relation to existing development and public viewpoints. The photographic record from this site visit forms part of the landscape assessment (see graphic attachment Pages 5-13).

A brief description of the existing landscape character of the site and surrounding landscape, taking into account the development enabled by the existing HRZ, forms the first part of the landscape assessment.

A visual effects analysis of the development that would be enabled under the amendments of the structure plan as compared with the existing Structure Plan and related zone provisions is then undertaken.

An assessment of landscape and visual effects in relation to the proposed Structure Plan amendments is provided.

An overall conclusion is then reached as to the potential visual and landscape effects of the proposed changes to the HRZ and Structure Plan.

## 2.0 Description of the Existing Environment

### 2.1 Site Location

The HRZ is located on the south western side of Arrowtown Township. The former deer farm has been developed into an international 18 hole golf course (the Hills) over the past decade. The Site is part of a larger triangular shaped landholding encompassing approximately 190 hectares in total and extends between Arrowtown-Lake Hayes Road in the west to McDonnell Road in the east, and Hogans Gully Road in the south. The existing HRZ applies to only part of this property (approximately 162ha).

### 2.2 Existing Landscape Character and Values

#### 2.2.1 Context Description

The surrounding topography of this north eastern corner of Wakatipu Basin is varied and of high visual diversity. Arrowtown Township is contained to the east by the slopes of the Crown Range Terrace and to the north by Brow Peak/German Hill. The township is nestled below the slopes along the Arrow River, which enters the Wakatipu Basin at this point. The small-scale glacial landform of Feehly Hill, with its popular scenic reserve, lies to the north of the Site, adjacent to the developed areas of Arrowtown.

The existing Millbrook Resort and golf course is located on the western side of Arrowtown-Lake Hayes Road. The design of the landscaping within the resort has similarities to the Site and the rolling terrain provides similarly manicured but diverse landscape characteristics.

The Arrowtown escarpment extends along the township and along its southern part it forms the current urban boundary. This prominent landscape feature contains urban development along the northern 900 metres of McDonnell Road. Intensive development extends along the road and creates a strong residential character along this stretch of road. South of this intensively developed section the road extends through a more rural landscape, with views to prominent dwellings along the top edge of the escarpment. A number of individual buildings are located on the flats adjacent to McDonnell Road to the south, including an existing maintenance shed on the Hills property near the entrance way to the Hills golf course.

The south eastern corner of the larger landholding, along McDonnell Road, is currently occupied by a driving range associated with the Hills golf course. This 8.4 hectare area, which has been zoned for Rural Lifestyle development through the DPR process, contains flat terrain. It therefore provides distinctively different landscape characteristics to the remainder of the property, which is comprised of more undulating terrain and more visual diversity. Adjacent to the southeastern corner of the HRZ, located along Mc Donnell Road, the Arrowtown Retirement Village comprising distinctly urban densities has been established over the past years.

The south western corner of the larger landholding, on the intersection of Arrowtown-Lake Hayes Road and Hogans Gully Road, contains a block of land that is visually separated from the remainder of the golf course by a distinctive change in elevation. The terrace edge that contains Speargrass Flat Valley steps up along Arrowtown-Lake Hayes Road and forms a series of small, visually contained terraces. These terraces currently contain residential dwellings that are largely out of view from the road due to the screening landform. The farmed block of land at the low-lying intersection currently does not contain any residential buildings, unlike the immediately adjacent property along Hogans Gully Road. The proposed Rural Lifestyle Zoning on this 19.71 hectare site is currently under appeal through the DPR process. Further to the east along Hogan Gully Road the Hogans Gully Resort Zone is located, which allows for the establishment of visitor accommodation and residential activity areas within the setting of a golf course.

### 2.2.2 Site Description

The HRZ Site itself is located centrally within the wider landholding described above. The Site comprises the existing Hills golf course and contains varied terrain with clusters of exotic and native trees, areas of tussock grassland, sand bunkers and small ponds interspersed between the holes. Apart from the main 18 hole golf course which occupies the majority of the land, the HRZ currently also currently contains a short course on the south-western side of the Clubhouse, facing towards Hogans Gully Road, although it is understood that this course will in the future be disestablished. The Site also contains existing buildings on its southern and western sides. These buildings are predominantly set within well-established clusters of vegetation and are difficult, if not impossible to see from outside the Site. These nodes of existing development form part of the HRZ (HS1-4 and A9).

The setting is of high aesthetic quality and designed and maintained to the highest standards. While significant earthworks have occurred as part of the establishment of the golf course, the appearance of the Site provides a high level of visual amenity and a semi-rural outlook for Arrowtown residences located along the western escarpment of the township (Cotter Ave and Advance Terrace). Within this view the existing buildings and future activity areas, already enabled by the HRZ, are situated in locations where buildings can be integrated into the existing landscape.

### 2.2.3 Landscape Values of the Hills Resort Zone

The landscape values of the Zone are described to comprise the following in PDP chapter 47.1.3:

*a. Hummocky moraine landform with plateaus, and remnant kettle lakes that have been converted to amenity ponds. The landform and vegetation patterns create a variable sense of openness and enclosure.*

*b. Vegetation patterns are characterised by exotic amenity plantings through the golf courses and around buildings, with native plantings adjacent to the pond, stream and wetland features. Isolated pockets of bush and woodlot plantings remain.*

*c. The landscape is relatively complex as a consequence of the landform and vegetation patterning, but the golf courses lend a coherence to the landscape. Part of the Zone is visible from elevated streets on the western edge of Arrowtown, although the hummocky terrain and existing vegetation limits visibility. The outlook from these areas is of an attractive golf course/parkland landscape on the edge of Arrowtown.*

*The undulating landform and varied vegetation, in combination with the golf courses, sculptures and other natural and physical features, has the capacity to integrate well sited, visually discreet development, with minimal wider effects on the landscape values of the Wakatipu Basin.*

*Buildings within the Zone are located where they are able to be absorbed by the underlying topography and vegetation, are visually recessive and set back from ridgeline crests. Some buildings are clustered adjacent to water features. Sculptures add a further layer of the cloak of human activity to the landscape, along with golf courses and associated buildings.*

## 3.0 Description of Current HRZ and Proposed Amendments

### 3.1 Current HRZ

In summary, the existing HRZ comprises a 162 hectare area of land that is currently occupied by the existing Hills golf course and residential dwellings owned by the Hills family members. The structure plan for the HRZ identifies areas suitable for development within the Zone.

The purpose of the Zone is to enable high quality on-site visitor activities and resort facilities, within a golf course setting and with a predominance of open space. The Zone currently provides for golf courses (including an 18-hole championship course and supporting activities), a sculpture park, walkway and cycleway, visitor industry activities, residential activities (including staff accommodation), and a small scale commercial area. A range of forms of visitor accommodation are anticipated in the Zone, including boutique hotels / lodges with associated visitor amenities (including cafés and restaurants and facilities for health and wellness), and units that are primarily available for short-term visitor stays. The Zone exhibits a resort style parkland character which varies between openness and enclosure due to the golf courses, hummocky landform and vegetation patterning.

Activity Areas have been carefully sited within the Zone to ensure that development is located where it can be absorbed into the landscape, and so that it will maintain the open space that contributes to amenity and character of the Zone. Buildings are integrated with the surrounding landform and planting, so that they are visually discrete. In some areas, landscaping is required to mitigate the potential adverse effects of built development on landscape character, and this will also contribute to the amenity of the zone. The Landscape Amenity Management Areas (LAMA) identified on the Structure Plan are located where this mitigation is required to avoid or mitigate potential adverse visual and cumulative effects, and they also contribute to the high level of parkland amenity within the Zone. The continuation of farming and equestrian activities in the parts of the Zone not used for golf or other development is also provided for.

The existing Structure Plan identifies a Clubhouse Area (C), Driving range (DR), Resort Service and staff accommodation (S1-S2), and 11 Activity Areas (A1-A11) for residential and/or visitor accommodation activities that could accommodate clusters of buildings for these purposes. Additionally, five Home Sites (HS 1-5) are included in the structure plan. While HS1 provides for a range of visitor accommodation, residential and recreation activities, the remaining four homesites (HS2-5) provide for individual residential homes (Residential activity, including Residential Visitor Accommodation and Homestays). Building levels/heights, colours and materials apply to development in each area in order to maintain an overall low visibility of buildings throughout the Site and when viewed from beyond.

Landscape Amenity Management Areas (LAMA) are identified on the Structure Plan and all have a relationship to a particular Activity Area. LAMAs comprise areas where landscaping, including mounding, additional planting, or retention of existing vegetation, or a combination of these, is required to integrate or mitigate the presence of buildings and infrastructure. The LAMAs have a dual function, being the mitigation of visual and cumulative effects of buildings so that they are not directly visible, or if visible, not prominent when viewed from neighbouring properties and public places, and as a means of contributing to the amenity of the Zone. Any terrain modification as part of a LAMA will be designed to read as a continuation of existing hummocky topography around the related development area and will generally be at a gentle grade. Planting may include a combination of evergreen beech and exotic deciduous trees laid out in naturalistic clusters consistent with the site and the rural character of the wider Basin, and in grassland to blend with surrounding areas of the golf course. The combination of evergreen and deciduous species will enable year-round visual mitigation while allowing seasonal interest throughout the property. At the time resource consent applications for subdivision or buildings are lodged, plans showing the location and design of the LAMA shall be submitted for approval. The Zone provisions require that all LAMA be established prior to the construction of any buildings within the relevant activity area.

## 3.2 Summary of Proposed Amendments to HRZ

The location of the activity areas and home sites has been chosen based on the high ability of these areas to absorb change due to their low visibility from outside the property. However, since the HRZ was adopted into the PDP, detailed design of the activity areas and the planned re-routing of the golf course have led to this proposal, which seeks to make amendments to some activity areas and provide for a number of new homesites.

### 3.2.1 Changes to Activity Areas

In some instances, the location or layout of an Activity Area is proposed to change, such as for A1, A2, A4, A5, A6, A10 and A11. One activity area (A7) is to be deleted from the Structure Plan, while eleven Homesites (HS6-16), The Golf Training Facility (GF) and the Sports Garden (SG) area are proposed additions.

While some of the activity areas are larger in extent and new activity areas are proposed (including homesites), the building coverage is to be reduced in some areas to allow for more sensitive siting of built form adjacent to the re-routed golf course layout and amongst existing landform.

The total addition in activity area (including homesites) will be 5.26ha (an increase from 15.88ha to 21.14ha), however the building area coverage will be increase by only 0.19ha (from 7.29ha to 7.48ha).

The table below outlines the changes to individual activity areas:

Changes to Activity Areas	Mitigation changes associated with AA	Current Size (ha)	Proposed Size (ha)
<p><b>Activity Area A1:</b></p> <p>Activity Area moved from location adjacent to the Clubhouse to the west to adapt to golf course re-routing. Now located at higher RL on undulating plateau area of site, rather than facing Arrowtown. Lower Site coverage proposed (30% instead of 55%) leading to small reduction in built area.</p>	<p>New LAMA created along eastern side of A1 with mounding and planting due to Activity Area location change. Activity Area controls are separated into a lower and upper tier to respond to the landform. For upper tier (A1.b) restrictions to 6m building height due to higher RL.</p>	0.91	1.50
<p><b>Activity Area A2:</b></p> <p>Expansion to the north. Lower Site coverage proposed (29% instead of 40%) leading to same built area.</p>	<p>New LAMA with mounding and planting wraps around northern side from existing LAMA to the east.</p>	0.92	1.40
<p><b>Activity Area A3:</b></p> <p>No change</p>	-	-	-
<p><b>Activity Area A4:</b></p> <p>Re-alignment of southern-most part of A4 to the east to allow for golf re-routing. Located closer to McDonnell Rd WBLP. Expansion in size, remaining at 40% building coverage</p>	<p>LAMA with mounding and planting moved to the east to maintain screening function from Arrowtown/ McDonnell Road.</p>	1.99	2.85

leading to 0.34ha increase in built form.			
<p><b>Activity Area A5:</b></p> <p>Small expansion to the north along the western side of A5, remaining at 40% building coverage leading to 0.14ha increase in built form. RL remains at 418.5 and 7m rolling height. Max RL changed from 419.5 to 422.0. Max rolling height remains 8m. Buildings this height would require a restricted discretionary activity consent. Buildings any taller would require a non-complying activity consent. .</p>	New LAMA with mounding and planting due to activity area extending north, enabled by re-routing of access road.	1.21	1.55
<p><b>Activity Area A6:</b></p> <p>Activity area extended slightly south to adapt to golf re-routing, removing western part with small overall reduction in area/ built form.</p>	No LAMA associated with A6 in current structure plan due to central location. Rolling building height increased from 8 to 10m with RL remaining.	0.89	0.75
<p><b>Activity Area A7:</b></p> <p>Activity Area deleted</p>	No LAMA required as A7 removed- removal of LAMA.	0.50	-
<p><b>Activity Area A8:</b></p> <p>No change</p>		0.52	0.52
<p><b>Activity Area A9:</b></p> <p>No change to area extent, but reduction of coverage from 55% to 38%.</p>	No mitigation required as reduction in built form by 0.47ha.	2.67	2.67
<p><b>Activity Area A10:</b></p> <p>Activity area shifted to south to adapt to golf routing. Current RLs in this area seemed to be set too low - RL changed from 406.5m to 410.5m and rolling height increase from 6m to 8m. Increase in size (0.24ha) and built form (0.10ha).</p>	Shift to south responds to existing landform and vegetation screening in this area which falls into LAMA. Area located within undulating terrain, facing west.	1.19	1.43

<p><b>Activity Area A11:</b></p> <p>Activity area extent changed to adapt to golf routing towards the existing pond, facing into the site. RL changed from 408.5 to 410.0. No change to rolling height (8m).</p>	<p>LAMA to NW has not changed and site is facing internally.</p>	<p>0.90</p>	<p>0.57</p>
<p><b>Sport and Garden Area:</b></p> <p>New Activity Area located adjacent to Mc Donnell Road entrance to the north of WBLP. Sport courts and pergola with limited structures, such as pavilion. 7% site coverage leading to additional 0.04ha built form.</p>	<p>No VA or residential buildings proposed. Any future structures can be integrated with amenity planting/ garden as part of the activity area design. LAMA with mounding on eastern and north-eastern side.</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>0.6</p>
<p><b>Golf Training Facility GF:</b></p> <p>New Activity Area where former A1 was located with smaller footprint adjacent to golf course to north of Clubhouse. 22.5% site coverage leading to maximum additional 0.08ha built form.</p>	<p>Existing LAMA for Clubhouse provides mitigation.</p> <p>The driving range building (0.21ha) in a nearby location is deleted.</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>0.40</p>

### 3.2.2 Homesite Additions

Currently, five homesites are included in the structure plan (HS1-5). HS 1-4 contain existing dwellings, while HS5 provides for a future dwelling. 113 Hogans Gully Road has been acquired recently and now allows for access from Hogans Gully Road. The acquisition of 113 Hogans Gully Road provides an opportunity for the establishment of three additional homesites west of HS5, located within the McDonnell Road visual catchment.

In addition, due to low use and relatively high maintenance costs, it is proposed to disestablish the existing 9-hole golf course on the south-western side of the HRZ and to establish a number of new homesites in this location. The new homesites (HS 9-14 and 16) are in the general location or vicinity of previously consented building platforms and buildings, although the relevant consents have now lapsed. One further new homesite (HS15) is proposed to replace an existing barn. HS 9-16 are located within the Hogans Gully Road visual catchment and are proposed to be accessed from Hogans Gully Road with an access point in the vicinity of HS15.

The addition of eleven new homesites will lead to a total addition in Homesite area size of 2.23ha (from 1.5ha to 3.73ha) with the building area coverage increasing from 0.41ha to 1.2ha. Site coverage controls are proposed which work to limit the total building coverage to 800m<sup>2</sup> which is generally consistent with the existing approved HS sites, with the exception of HS7 where the proposed site coverage rule would limit all buildings to 400m<sup>2</sup> due to spatial constraints. The maximum building height for each new HS will be 6.5m and RLs are set individually to ensure that the buildings sit low in the terrain.

<b>Changes to Home Sites</b>	<b>Mitigation changes associated with AA</b>	<b>Current Size</b>	<b>Proposed Size</b>
<b>HS1 - HS4:</b>  Existing buildings, no change	No change to LAMA	0.30	0.30
<b>HS5:</b>  No change to HRZ structure plan	New structural planting on eastern side of HS5 to connect to LAMAs around HS6-8.	0.30	0.30
<b>HS6 – HS8:</b>  Additional buildings located to the west of HS5 in same visual catchment and relatively close proximity, accessed from same access road as HS5.	New LAMA and structural planting on southern side of HS6-HS8, with landform and planting wrapping around HS and extending to eastern side of HS5. Max total footprint of all buildings 800m <sup>2</sup> , except a maximum of 400m <sup>2</sup> for HS7.	-	0.13-0.15 per HS
<b>HS9 – HS10:</b>  Additional buildings located in south-west facing visual catchment. Accessed from Hogan Gully Road along the same access road as HS15.	New LAMA with mounding and structural planting framework associated with HS9-HS15. Max total building footprint 800m <sup>2</sup> .	-	0.20 per HS
<b>HS11 – HS14 &amp; HS 16:</b>  Additional buildings located in west facing visual catchment. Accessed from Hogan Gully Road along the same access road as HS15.	New LAMA with mounding and structural planting framework associated with HS9-HS16. Max total building footprint 800m <sup>2</sup> .	-	0.20 per HS for HS 11-13  0.30 for HS 14  0.2 for HS 16
<b>HS15:</b>  Additional building located in building platform of existing barn. Lower-lying and closer to access point from Hogans Gully Road (same access point as HS9-14).	New LAMA with mounding and structural planting framework associated with HS9-HS16. Max total building footprint 800m <sup>2</sup> .	-	0.30

### 3.2.3 Access and planting framework

The proposed homesites straddle two visual catchments with HS 6-8 located to the west of existing HS 5 within the catchment facing McDonnell Road, and HS 9-15 to the south-east of HS4 facing Hogans Gully Road. Proposed homesites HS 9-15 are located within the southern part of the HRZ within an area that is currently occupied by a 9-hole golf course.

Access to proposed HS 6-8 will be gained from McDonnell Road, through an extension of the access for existing HS 5.

Access to HS 9-15 will be gained from an upgraded entrance off Hogans Gully Road, with an intersection in the vicinity of HS15 where an existing barn is currently located. This access road will connect to the clubhouse and existing HS 1-3.

Access to the activity areas will remain as outlined on the current structure plan, except for minor realignment in the vicinity of A4 due to the golf course rerouting.

A1 is proposed to be accessed via the clubhouse/ HS 1-3 access road.

It is anticipated that once the 9-hole golf course is disestablished, earthworks for the proposed new homesites will be undertaken comprehensively by the developer, including any mounding for the LAMAs associated with the homesites and for the associated roads/driveways. This assumption is on the basis that it is likely that the land developer will be undertaking a subdivision and associated groundworks to create the land parcels and building platforms for future residential units on each Homesite.

Once earthworks are completed, the LAMAs and a structural planting area (SPA) must be prior to dwelling construction commencing on the homesites. A species list is proposed for the SPA.

It is anticipated that the earthworks and LAMA/SPA planting will be carried out comprehensively by the developer prior to any construction works commencing to ensure a cohesive design, appearance and implementation. It is anticipated that the planting within the proposed SPA and will be maintained through a joint ownership structure (eg. owner association of the resort).

The LAMAs associated with the new homesites will contain the same species as the proposed SPA in the vicinity of the homesites, comprising Grey Shrubland native trees and shrubs (but limited in the LAMA to 2m height at maturity to preserve views) that relate to the existing character of the golf course and wider area. Planting by individual owners will be limited to homesite area. As outlined above, it is anticipated that the developer will comprehensively undertake earthworks and planting to create the land parcels and building platforms for future residential units on each Homesite. It is understood that Council has the ability to deal with these issues through consent conditions via the matters of control for subdivision.

The wider structural planting (SPA) will tie in with the proposed planting within the LAMAs for each homesite to ensure that a homogenous appearance of vegetation can be achieved that visually connects the two visual catchments that the homesites are located in. The structural planting does not fulfil a screening purpose per se, apart from obscuring any cuts required for the access road/ bike track establishment, but is considered beneficial in providing a visual context for built development within the hummocky terrain on the southern part of the HRZ. The structural planting design follows the landform and existing vegetation, with native tree planting proposed in the wetter gullies and native shrubland species along the steeper escarpments.

While the proposed indigenous planting in SPAs will also have ecological benefits through improved biodiversity values on site, the main purpose of the planting is landscape-related. The LAMAs have been specifically placed in proximity of the Homesites to provide screening for these individual buildings, including through landform shaping and planting. However, the

existing 9-hole golf course landscape and the hummocky areas below that are currently quite open. In order to avoid the unnatural appearance of confined planting areas around home sites, the larger-scale SPA areas are proposed to tie these individual areas together. By reducing the openness of the steep escarpment and gully landforms additional texture and darker vegetation will assist in integrating the built form and providing a homogenous appearance around the homesites and between LAMAs, while not providing specific screening.

The alignment of the access ways in the Hogans Gully catchment has been designed to ensure lowest possible landscape effects, following the underlying terrain as much as possible. The access off Hogans Gully Road initially utilises the existing farm entry and then follows the alignment of the gully to the upper terrace area where the new homesites will be located. Within the gully some earthworks/ engineering will be required, but can be visually absorbed in this location due to the landform.

On the upper terrace (at about the elevation of the water race), the road generally traverses a contour line to access the individual homesites (HS9-14), which will minimise earthworks in this area. While some moderate earthworks will be required, earthworks for the proposed new homesites will be undertaken comprehensively by the developer, including any mounding for the LAMAs associated with the homesites and for the associated roads/driveways. Once earthworks are completed, the LAMAs and a structural planting area (SPA) must be implemented prior to dwelling construction commencing on the homesites. The SPA extends along the escarpment and gully area and will assist in visually integrating the access way.

## 4.0 Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

The following sections of this assessment address the potential landscape and visual effects of development in each of the proposed activity areas/ homesites. The assessment:

- Provides a description of each area's ability to absorb change based on existing landform and vegetation;
- Provides an analysis of potential visibility from public and private places;
- Recommends mitigation and enhancement measures, where necessary, to mitigate any potential landscape and visual effects that might arise from the proposed development;
- Reaches conclusions about the anticipated landscape effects of development as a whole.

### 4.1 Assessment Methodology

#### 4.1.1 Assessment of Effects on Landscape Values

Landscape and visual impacts result from natural or induced change in the components, character or quality of the landscape. Usually these are the result of landform or vegetation modification or the introduction of new structures, facilities or activities. All these impacts must be assessed to determine the effects of a proposal on landscape character and quality, rural

amenity and on public and private views. In this assessment the potential effects are based on a combination of the landscape's sensitivity in light of already anticipated development under the HRZ and visibility and the nature and scale of the development proposal.

This assessment follows the concepts and principles outlined in Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines<sup>1</sup>. A full methodology is outlined in **Appendix 1** of this report. In summary, the effects ratings are based upon a seven-point scale which ranges from very low to very high.

Te Tangi a te Manu recognises the term 'landscape effects' as all-encompassing, and that visual effects and natural character effects are a subset of landscape effects. This assessment provides separate sections to discuss landscape and visual effects, but is referred to throughout as Landscape Effects Assessment (LEA) in accordance with the Guidelines.

#### 4.1.2 Assessment of Visual Effects

The analysis of potential visibility includes an assessment from viewpoints on surrounding public roads and reserves, in particular from Arrowtown and the roads adjacent to the Site.

Four representative elevated viewpoints within Arrowtown (Feehly Hill and along Arrowtown escarpment) were assessed and conclusions about visibility from private properties drawn based on an assessment from nearby public viewpoints, such as roads.

The assessment of visibility is framed in the following way:

Viewpoint distances:

- Long distance: around 1.0 km or more (eg top of Feehly Hill)
- Mid distance: 500m – 1.0km (eg southern edge of Arrowtown or Arrowtown-Lake Hayes Road )
- Short distance: less than 500m (eg McDonnell Road, Hogans Gully Road)

Visibility:

- Low: viewed from mid to long distance, partly visible (less than half of the building)
- Medium: viewed from mid distance, partly visible (more than half of the building)
- High: viewed from short to mid distance, partly or fully visible (more than half of the building)

Visibility can be full, partial or glimpsed with distance influencing the level of visual effects. It is worth noting that the visibility analysis is based on a factual assessment on whether a building is visible. Consideration of whether a building can be made less visible by the proposed landscaping, colours and materials are taken into account when assessing visual effects.

A 3D model of the Site and all the proposed buildings, earthworks and planting has been prepared to assess the visibility from surrounding viewpoints. Screenshots from this model are included in the graphic attachment with photos taken from the same viewpoints to enable comparison. The model is based on 1m contours and includes existing vegetation (based on Lidar data). The buildings are modelled at the RL and building height outlined in the proposal. For ease of legibility of proposed built form, it is shown in yellow (for homesites) and pink (for

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<sup>1</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, July 2022

activity areas) which accentuates the visibility well beyond the expected level of visual effect with buildings in muted colours. The top 1m of potential built form is shown in red to provide a scale of visual effect (ie. if partial or glimpsed views are possible to a building established at the maximum height and proposed RL). The proposed vegetation within SPAs and LAMAs is shown at 2m height in the model, in addition to the proposed landform modelling.

#### 4.1.3 Visual Simulations

A comprehensive package of visual simulations has been prepared in response to this request. The photos for the visual simulations were taken from the following nine viewpoints (as shown on the viewpoint location plan Figure 1):

VP 1: View from Feehley Hill looking South

VP 2: View from Fox Terrace Walkway looking Southwest

VP 3: View from Cotter Avenue Walkway looking Southwest

VP 4: View from Cotter Avenue Walkway outside no.49 looking Southwest

VP 5: View from Arrowtown Lake-Hayes near Hogans Gully Road Intersection looking East

VP 6: View from outside 36 Hogans Gully Road looking Northeast

VP 7: View from outside 58 Hogans Gully Road looking Northeast

VP 8: View from outside 108 Hogans Gully Road looking Northwest

VP 9: View from View from Arrowtown Lake-Hayes opposite Ayrburn looking East (as requested in addition)

For Viewpoints 1-4 (Arrowtown visual catchment) the following three scenarios are presented for each viewpoint:

1. Single Photo 50mm Frame (Existing)
2. Single Photo 50mm Frame (Proposed without planting, showing Approved AA/ HS):  
This view shows the proposed buildings within the homesites and activity areas, with the buildings depicted presenting the maximum permitted RL or height, and building coverage. It also depicts the proposed earthworks and mounding in the LAMA adjacent to the homesite/activity area, as shown on the zone Structure Plan. No planting is shown within the LAMAs and SPAs however, so as to provide an understanding of the mitigation that would be provided by landform versus vegetation. The existing vegetation within the site is shown as removed if this is required for the implementation of the AA/ HS or if new planting within a LAMA/ SPA is likely to replace existing exotic trees that are nearing the end of their lifespan. In these views, the red outline illustrates already approved activity areas/homesites (i.e. under the operative Structure Plan), so that the difference between the current and proposed activity area locations can be understood. The details of the LAMA mounding and plantings, and the bulk, scale and form of future buildings would be confirmed through controlled activity consents. The visual simulations depict a worst case temporary scenario, without any mitigation measures such as would be required and assessed through the controlled activity resource consent process.

3. Single Photo 50mm Frame (Proposed with Planting at 5 Years): These visual simulations show the proposed built form with the amended AAs and HSs, proposed earthworks/ mounding as well as vegetation within LAMAs and SPAs 5 years after planting. Given that implementation of planting within LAMAs will be a requirement, this view is the most realistic to illustrate the permanent effects which would reduce further as planting matures.

For Viewpoints 5-9 (Hogans Gully visual catchment) no development anticipated under the operative Structure Plan would be visible (apart for existing dwellings) and therefore the Scenario 2 only shows the proposed built form within the HS areas and earthworks/ mounding. Scenario 3 shows the proposal at 5 years after the implementation of planting.

A methodology statement is attached to the graphic attachment, outlining the best-practice process that was followed for the preparation of the visual simulations, in line with NZILA guidance.

## 5.0 Assessment of Visual Effects by Activity Area/ Homesite

The following section provides an assessment of the visual effects of the proposed development for each activity area within the Proposed HRZ, including a short description of the proposed changes, comment on the area's ability to absorb change and an assessment of visibility based on the site investigations, analysis of the 3D model and recommended measures to appropriately mitigate any landscape and/or visual effects.

### 5.1 Visual Effects from Viewpoints (Visual Simulations)

This section provides a detailed assessment of visibility from each of the selected viewpoints that visual simulations have been prepared for, outlining the following:

- visibility of the buildings anticipated under the currently approved (operative) structure plan,
- the potential changes to the view if the amendments are implemented as proposed in the Plan Change request, but without the proposed LAMA/ SPA planting, and
- an assessment of long-term landscape effects of the proposal following mitigation.

Viewpoint	Assessment of Visibility (Compared to Approved Structure Plan)
<b>Viewpoint 1</b>	<p><u>Visibility under existing (operative) Provisions:</u></p> <p>From the elevated viewpoint on Feehly Hill the majority of HRZ built form within the Arrowtown visual catchment would be visible to some extent, with A8, A10 and A2 most clearly visible in the foreground and relatively limited screening. Most of the remaining activity areas would be partially screened by existing mature vegetation within the site.</p> <p><u>Change to View/ Potential Visibility if Plan Change proposal is implemented:</u></p> <p>While there are small changes to the view relating to the layout of A10 and A2, it would be difficult to detect this difference, as the built form remains in the same area. The</p>

Viewpoint	Assessment of Visibility (Compared to Approved Structure Plan)
	<p>most noticeable change would relate to A1 which is located in the midground to the west of the Club house. While the currently approved location would appear more clustered with the existing and approved clubhouse development, the re-located A1 activity area is in a part of the existing golf course that currently does not contain built form.</p> <p><u>Assessment of Long-Term Landscape Effects following Mitigation:</u></p> <p>From this elevated viewpoint the proposed planting within the LAMAs will be less effective than from lower-lying areas, although this is the case under both the operative and proposed Structure Plan. The re-routing of the golf course between the club house and A1 will mean that a stand of existing mature conifers will need to be removed (including in an area that contains the approved LAMA for the current A1). The new LAMA associated with the relocated A1 will not contain any high-stature plants to avoid conflict with the new golf course alignment. The new Golf Facility area will be located in the eastern part of the approved A1. The implementation of A1 in its currently approved (operative) location would have required removal of this stand of trees as well.</p> <p>Overall, the new layout and location of A1 is likely to be only perceptible from Feehly Hill due to its internal location within the site and effects from there are considered to be low. The small scale amendments to the other activity areas would be difficult to detect as they occur in similar locations. The introduction of new homesites in the Hogan Gully catchment would not be visible from this viewpoint.</p>
<b>Viewpoint 2</b>	<p><u>Visibility under existing (operative) Provisions:</u></p> <p>From the northern end of the Arrowtown escarpment A10 would be visible through the LAMA which contains existing willows and other mature vegetation. A11 would only be just detectable in the backdrop with potential filtered glimpses through the vegetation. The views to A1 and the Clubhouse are blocked by existing vegetation within the site.</p> <p><u>Change to View/ Potential Visibility if Plan Change proposal is implemented:</u></p> <p>The re-alignment of A10 would be mostly perceptible due to the removal of a stand of exotic trees that is currently located within this area. The buildings may appear visually somewhat more prominent in the eastern, higher-lying part of the site, but the extent of built form would be comparable between the approved and proposed structure plan/ provisions.</p> <p><u>Assessment of Long-Term Landscape Effects following Mitigation:</u></p> <p>The LAMA associated with A10 will help to fill the gaps between existing mature willows that already provide effective screening for a large part of the activity area. The visual simulation for this viewpoint only shows a few small trees/ shrubs in the LAMA, but there would be space available for more effective screen planting.</p>
<b>Viewpoint 3</b>	<p><u>Visibility under existing Provisions:</u></p> <p>From this viewpoint a large neighbouring property is located between HRZ and McDonnell Road which contains landform undulations that extend into the HRZ. In addition, numerous mature trees are located within the site in proximity to the neighbouring property that currently provide effective screening of the approved (operative) development proposal. The LAMAs that are associated with A3 and A2 ensure that this vegetation is maintained as screening. There are few glimpses possible between vegetation that would extend to small parts of A2 and A3.</p> <p><u>Change to View/ Potential Visibility if Plan Change proposal is implemented:</u></p> <p>The proposed changes to A2 and A3 would be inconsequential to the visual effects in this view. The most noticeable change would likely be the gap in vegetation that is</p>

Viewpoint	Assessment of Visibility (Compared to Approved Structure Plan)
	<p>opened up through the removal of the existing mature conifers to the north of the clubhouse where the new GF (and formerly A1) is located. The gap in the trees would enable partial views towards the new, slightly elevated location of A1 in an area that previously did not contain development.</p> <p><u>Assessment of Long-Term Landscape Effects following Mitigation:</u></p> <p>The LAMA associated with A1 will not contain high-stature vegetation due to its location within the golf course alignment. Therefore, the screening effect of the LAMA for A1, as glimpsed through the gap of existing vegetation, would only relate to the proposed mounding.</p>
<b>Viewpoint 4</b>	<p><u>Visibility under existing (operative) Provisions:</u></p> <p>Under the approved structure plan, views from this southern-most viewpoint along the Arrowtown escarpment would include activity areas A4, A5 and A6 in the midground, as well as HS 5 on the elevated ground behind. The closest buildings would be within S1, in relatively close proximity to the McDonnell Road boundary, located where the existing maintenance compound is present. These buildings would be partially screened through landform and planting within the associated LAMAs.</p> <p><u>Change to View/ Potential Visibility if Plan Change proposal is implemented:</u></p> <p>The proposed changes to the layout of A4, A5 and A6 would be difficult to detect, as the built form would be located in the same general area. The introduction of three additional homesites (HS6, HS7 and HS8) would be adjacent to the already approved HS5 at a similar elevation along the escarpment. While these three homesites would be visible, they would appear in the backdrop to the activity areas on the flats.</p> <p>The Sports Garden Area would be visible on the flat ground to the south of the access road where a number of existing glasshouses are currently located. From this elevated viewpoint, screening through the associated LAMA would be limited.</p> <p><u>Assessment of Long-Term Landscape Effects following Mitigation:</u></p> <p>The extensive LAMAs associated with A5 and A4 will assist in breaking up the partial views to the built form which would be possible from this elevated viewpoint. This remains similar to the approved (operative) structure plan. The homesites on the escarpment will be separated from each other by LAMAs. In addition to this, large SPAs will provide a wider revegetation framework that follows the gully landforms, framing the built form. These extensive planting areas will provide the visual context for the homesites HS 5-8, assisting in their visual integration.</p>
<b>Viewpoint 5</b>	<p><u>Visibility under existing (operative) Provisions:</u></p> <p>From viewpoints 5-9, which are located within the Hogans Gully visual catchment, no new built form would be visible under the approved (operative) structure plan. However, two existing buildings on neighbouring properties along Hogans Gully Road are visible from both Arrowtown-Lake Hayes and Hogans Gully Road.</p> <p><u>Change to View/ Potential Visibility if Plan Change proposal is implemented:</u></p> <p>From a short section of Arrowtown- Lake Hayes Road (around 400-450m near intersection with Hogan Gully Road to Ayrburn turn-off) the new proposed homesites that are located within the Hogan Gully visual catchment (HS9-16) are partially visible amongst the elevated hummocky landform. From this viewpoint proposed HS13 and 14 would be obscured by existing mature trees on the escarpment. Partial views to proposed HS 9, 10, 11, 12 and 16 show them located at a similar elevation, with part of proposed HS 11 appearing near the ridgeline. Proposed HS 15 is located lower, and</p>

Viewpoint	Assessment of Visibility (Compared to Approved Structure Plan)
	<p>therefore mostly hidden by the existing mature shelterbelt on the flats below. These poplars also provide partial screening for the other homesites.</p> <p><u>Assessment of Long-Term Landscape Effects following Mitigation:</u></p> <p>The large SPA that extends across the escarpment is particularly effective from this longer-distance viewpoint where it ties the individual homesites together into a comprehensive revegetation area. While the proposed homesites have individual LAMAs as well, where landform shaping and some lower planting is proposed, the proposed SPAs will ensure a homogenous overall appearance. The texture provided by the revegetation areas will frame the buildings and assist in their overall visual integration with the underlying landform.</p>
<b>Viewpoint 6</b>	<p><u>Visibility under existing (operative)Provisions:</u></p> <p>From viewpoints 5-9, which are located within the Hogans Gully visual catchment, no new built form would be visible under the approved (operative) structure plan. However, the existing building on the neighbouring property at 63 Hogans Gully Road is visually the most prominent building in this view due to its proximity to the viewpoint.</p> <p><u>Change to View/ Potential Visibility if Plan Change proposal is implemented:</u></p> <p>From this viewpoint on Hogans Gully Road only relatively small parts of proposed HS10, 11, 12, 13 and 16 are visible. Proposed HS 15 is located behind the existing neighbouring dwelling. Proposed HS 13 and 11 are almost entirely screened by the proposed landform shaping within the LAMAs. The other three proposed homesites would be partially visible, with HS10 and 16 backdropped by terrain and HS12 appearing close to the internal ridgeline.</p> <p><u>Assessment of Long-Term Landscape Effects following Mitigation:</u></p> <p>The proposed SPA would provide additional partial screening for proposed HS 12 and 10 while the other proposed homesites rely mostly on the landform shaping proposed as part of the LAMAs. The proposed SPA is particularly noticeable from this viewpoint as it extends across the steep escarpment below proposed HS12 in relatively close proximity.</p>
<b>Viewpoint 7</b>	<p><u>Visibility under existing Provisions (operative):</u></p> <p>From viewpoints 5-9, which are located within the Hogans Gully visual catchment, no new built form would be visible under the approved (operative) structure plan. However, two existing buildings on neighbouring properties along Hogans Gully Road are visible from this viewpoint.</p> <p><u>Change to View/ Potential Visibility if Plan Change proposal is implemented:</u></p> <p>As Hogans Gully Road enters a more restricted section, views become more confined. From this viewpoint only proposed HS 9, 10 and 16 would be visible with a vegetated backdrop, with the remainder of the proposed homesites screened by either existing topography or proposed landform shaping.</p> <p><u>Assessment of Long-Term Landscape Effects following Mitigation:</u></p> <p>The SPA on the escarpment below proposed HS 10 and 16 would provide partial screening for these two homesites, with proposed H9 almost fully screened by landform.</p>
<b>Viewpoint 8</b>	<p><u>Visibility under existing Provisions:</u></p> <p>From viewpoints 5-9, which are located within the Hogans Gully visual catchment, no new built form would be visible under the approved (operative) structure plan. The</p>

Viewpoint	Assessment of Visibility (Compared to Approved Structure Plan)
	<p>existing buildings on neighbouring properties are not visible from this viewpoint. However, a number of existing buildings on the opposite side of the road can be seen.</p> <p><u>Change to View/ Potential Visibility if Plan Change proposal is implemented:</u></p> <p>Glimpsed views to proposed Homesites 9, 10, 11, 13 and 16 would be theoretically possible from this viewpoint. However, the proposed landform shaping within the associated LAMAs would almost fully screen these views.</p> <p><u>Assessment of Long-Term Landscape Effects following Mitigation:</u></p> <p>As part of the implementation of proposed HS 11 and the new golf course alignment the existing stand of mature stand of conifers in its proximity would be removed. The planting within the proposed SPAs would add a substantial amount of texture and darker colour into this currently very open view that contains predominantly the grassed hummocks where the existing 9 hole golf course is located. With LAMAs, landform shaping and SPA planting in place, the visibility of the proposed buildings would be very low from this section of Hogans Gully Road.</p>
<b>Viewpoint 9</b>	<p><u>Visibility under existing Provisions:</u></p> <p>From viewpoints 5-9, which are located within the Hogans Gully visual catchment, no new built form would be visible under the approved (operative) structure plan. However, two existing buildings on neighbouring properties along Hogans Gully Road are visible from both Arrowtown-Lake Hayes and Hogans Gully Road. From the Ayrburn turn off there are also two corrugated iron sheds visible within the Hills' landholding. One is located where new HS 15 is proposed.</p> <p><u>Change to View/ Potential Visibility if Plan Change proposal is implemented:</u></p> <p>Glimpsed views to proposed Homesites 9 and 16 would be theoretically possible from this viewpoint. However, the proposed landform shaping within the associated LAMAs would almost fully screen these views. Proposed HS 15 would be visible in the same location as the existing corrugated iron shed with proposed HS 10 in its vicinity. HS 10 and 15 would be partially screened by landform and backdropped by existing terrain.</p> <p><u>Assessment of Long-Term Landscape Effects following Mitigation:</u></p> <p>The proposed SPA extends visibly across the steep escarpment located between proposed HS 10 and 15. It helps in particular for HS 10 to integrate it into the currently very open hummocky terrain.</p>

Effects anticipated from elevated viewpoints (Tobins Track and Zig Zag lookout Crown Range): Tobins Track is a popular walking track on the Arrowtown escarpment that provides for views across the Wakatipu Basin from the top and several glimpses along the way where vegetation allows. The Zig Zag lookout is frequented by tourists on their way across the Crown Range. Similarly, this viewpoint provides extensive views across the basin. While The Hills golf course is in a central location to the view from the top of Tobins Track (see photo below), the view from the Zig Zag lookout extends towards Morven Hill and the eastern part of the Wakatipu Basin with The Hills Site largely out of view.



*Photo 1 from top of Tobins Track (Panorama).*

The Tobins Track lookout shows the McDonnell Road part of the Site in the context of past and currently ongoing development. The large scale earthworks associated with the implementation of the Hogans Gully Resort Zone are visible on the far left extent of the view, visually somewhat separated from the Hills. The existing SHA (retirement village) along McDonnell Road appears on the neighbouring site to the Hills and the more recent extensions to Arrowtown along Centennial Ave frame the view to the right and in the foreground. Arrowtown Golf Course forms the foreground to the left. Overall, it is possible to fully appreciate the large size of the Hills land holding (162ha) from here and while the proposed development will be visible in this view, it will be at much lower densities than the existing surrounding developments, nestled into the landforms found within the site. It is considered unlikely that the difference between the currently approved built form and the proposed changes would be readily perceptible from this viewpoint.

## 5.2 Activity Area Amendments

### **Activity Area A1**

The extent and location of this activity area changes from the northern side of the Clubhouse to the western side. Within the former A1 area a golf facility building will be located, with a substantially smaller footprint and lower effects due to this and the lower building height. The proposed golf facility building will replace the driving range building (albeit differently located) which is deleted under the current proposal.

The new location for A1 is situated within an area that formerly did not contain any buildings, due to the existing golf course. The centralised location within the HRZ of the proposed new A1 area means that the buildings in this area would have very low visibility from outside the Site, apart from the elevated viewpoint on Feehly Hill where visual effects would be low. While located within the McDonnell Road visual catchment, the activity area is around a kilometre from the elevated Arrowtown escarpment (Cotter Avenue/ Advance Terrace) from where

potential glimpsed views to parts of the buildings could be gained from. No views can be gained from low-lying viewpoints due to intervening terrain and vegetation.

To ensure that any visibility from the Arrowtown escarpment will be minimised, the existing landform to the east of proposed A1 will be built on in terms of landform and planting within an associated LAMA. This means that the existing stand of mature pine trees can be removed without increasing the level of visual effect from elevated viewpoints to the east. The upper tier of the activity area, located at a higher elevation, will be limited to a lower building height (6m instead of 8m) and the overall building coverage in the area would be lower than for A1 in its current location (reduced from 55% to 30%).

Overall, the visual effects of this amended A1 are considered to be comparable or lower than for the activity area in the current structure plan if implemented with the proposed LAMA, as effects are mostly internalised in this central location within the HRZ.

## **Activity Area A2**

Activity Area A2 is located near the eastern boundary, adjacent to the neighbouring property. This activity area is proposed to be slightly expanded to the north to accommodate an additional building. Despite its location in vicinity to the property boundary the activity area is screened by landform from residential buildings on neighbouring lots to the east. While the RL for A2 will be maintained, the area will be expanded and site coverage reduced from 40% to 28.6%. This means that the increase in built form in this area will be 3,000m<sup>2</sup>.

The landform that contains the current activity area to the north will be extended to continue its screening effect for currently approved and additional buildings in this area. The LAMA that accompanies this area mostly consists of planting to the east and mounding and planting to the north. The planting and landform separating this activity area from the neighbouring property will help to block most of the views, but the tops of the proposed buildings may be visible.

Given that the buildings would partially screen each other from the key viewpoints along the Arrowtown escarpment off Shaw Street at a distance of over 500m, the additional visual effects from this viewing angle are considered to be low at most.

## **Activity Area A4**

The northern part of A4 remains in its original location with no additional effects. The southern lots will be relocated to the east, onto the other side of the adjacent golf hole. All lots will continue to face west, away from Arrowtown.

The existing ridge/ LAMA in the current structure plan will remain the same for the northern lots. A new LAMA is proposed to screen the re-located southern lots on their eastern side. This LAMA will build on the existing ridgeline which has a screening function towards the Arrowtown escarpment (Advance Terrace). In order to achieve this, the existing elevated landform will only require in-fill of lower-lying parts. Overall, visibility of the relocated lots will be low, with the LAMA extension slightly above the elevation of the existing ridge. Filtered views, with roofs of building potentially visible between vegetation, may be gained at a distance of around 700m from the Arrowtown escarpment. The approved WBLP along McDonnell Road would also be visible within this view from the escarpment and intervening in views from McDonnell Road.

This relatively large area can be visually contained to the east through its associated LAMA to mostly screen views from parts of the Arrowtown escarpment, in particular from Advance Terrace. It is proposed that the existing terrain undulation on the eastern side of and adjacent to this activity area is contoured further to provide more landform screening. The landform will also be planted on, with a mix of evergreen indigenous trees (eg beech) and deciduous exotic trees to provide further screening. The proposed LAMA shown on the structure plan adjacent to the activity area provides an appropriate means by which to achieve these outcomes, as these will be subject to an approval process by council as a Controlled Activity. The overall visual effects of the amended A4 will be comparable to the currently approved location due to the screening landform and planting extending along the north-eastern side of the activity area which will provide visual separation from McDonnell Road and the Arrowtown escarpment.

### **Activity Area A5**

Area A5 is located in the central part of the Site, in proximity to the existing golf course, the access road and Clubhouse. This activity area is located to the west of A4, with buildings facing towards the east to the golf hole between these two activity areas. The internal facing activity area will be mostly screened by A4 and its associated LAMA to the east. In addition, a separate LAMA is proposed near the north-eastern corner which will screen any potential views to the northern-most buildings in the activity area. A higher RL is proposed to accommodate the additional northern buildings with an increased building height proposed from 7m to 8m to follow the rising terrain effectively. The LAMA to the north-east has been adjusted to accommodate the amended access road alignment that has been straightened in its central section.

The low-lying southern area is adjacent to a small waterway and forms an amphitheatre shaped oval, generally out of view from outside of the Site. Due to its internal location this activity area is at a considerable distance (around 800m) from Advance Terrace in Arrowtown, and has a high potential to absorb buildings. Views to the area can only be gained from high-lying viewpoints in the east, such as Feehly Hill, but not from the Arrowtown escarpment.

This internal area faces into the central part of the golf course and is visually well contained. Due to A4 and its associated landform to the east, views to this area from Arrowtown will be screened as buildings are located off the eastern ridgeline that confines this area. Additional mitigation within the extended LAMA will screen views from the east, with planting implemented on the north-eastern ridgeline, which would be highly effective for views from the Arrowtown escarpment. The amended LAMA shown on the structure plan appropriately provides for this, leading to low visual effects.

### **Activity Area A10**

This activity area lies on an elevated terrace that is visually separated from the southern part of the golf course. This flat terrace faces in a westerly direction towards Lake Hayes and has no visual connection to Hogans Gully and Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road. The only views to the area are from a long distance on Slope Hill above Lake Hayes at over 2km distant. Due to the high-lying nature of the terrace that blocks views from the east, the change absorption capacity of this activity area is high. The landform creates an amphitheatre-like setting where buildings could be successfully integrated with very low adverse visual effects from the elevated viewpoints along the escarpment of Arrowtown. Direct visibility of this area is limited to Feehly Hill, where the mature vegetation does not provide the same screening function due to the elevation of the viewpoint.

The extension of the area to the south remains on the elevated terraces, without encroaching on the rocky escarpment that faces east towards Arrowtown. In order to ensure that dwellings

can be accommodated on the rising landform, the amended A10 will have a higher RL (410.50masl) and will provide for higher buildings (8m in height instead of 6m). The existing landform, rocky outcrops, wetland and vegetation to the east is included in a LAMA which has been extended to the south to ensure that the additional dwellings in A10 are screened from Arrowtown, leading to very low visual effects.

### **Activity Area A11**

The northern part of the property is located in vicinity of Arrowtown-Lake Hayes Road. This road boundary is currently visually separated from the golf course by a mature hedge. This vegetation also provides full screening for the existing dwelling and driveway to the west of this activity area (HS 1). It is proposed to maintain this vegetation through a LAMA that extends along the road, blocking all views to A11 from the north, including from Millbrook Resort.

The amendment to A11 proposes to extend the area towards the south, along an existing pond/lake in this area. It is proposed to re-align the shape of the pond to allow for the golf hole realignment in this area.

Similar to A10, this activity area is located in the central part of the Site where views towards the east and west are curtailed by landform. The high-lying area does not allow for views from Hogan Gully Road or McDonnell Road, and visibility is constrained to glimpses from the southern Arrowtown escarpment and to full views from the long-distance viewpoint at Feehly Hill at a distance of around 1km. The existing dwellings located within Millbrook Resort are visible in relative proximity of A11 in this view.

The maintenance of the hedge along Arrowtown-Lake Hayes Road will provide full screening from the northern side, protected by the LAMA as shown in the current structure plan. Any visual effects from the east would be very low, if detectable at all.

### **Sports Courts and Garden Area**

This activity area is an addition to the HRZ to allow for gardens, sport courts, gathering areas and recreation. This will include structures up to 200m<sup>2</sup>, such as a pavilion and toilets. The area will provide recreation opportunities without interfering with the golf course alignment.

The location of this activity area is in the vicinity of the existing HRZ entrance off McDonnell Road, situated to the north of the approved WBLP and the relocated access road which will be moved slightly to the south. The amended location (since lodgement of the PC application) of the SGA is on the south-western side of the access road to HRZ. This location has changed due to the location requirements of a water storage facility which will be to the north of the access road. This area currently contains flat, open land with intermittent trees near the McDonnell Road boundary. This general character will be maintained due to the setback from the road and the limited built form in this area. Minor landform shaping and low planting within the LAMA along the north-eastern boundary of this activity area will assist with the visual integration and framing of the area without curtailing the long-distance views into the elevated part of the site and the amenity associated with this. With the relocation of the access road in the vicinity of the SGA, a LAMA is proposed on the north-eastern side of the access road to achieve screening in views from McDonnell Road when approaching from Arrowtown.

It is acknowledged that this area has limited ability to absorb built form due to its vicinity to McDonnell Road, therefore the proposal is to limit built form and development within this area (with only 7% building coverage proposed). The setback from the road would be around 80m to allow for views to extend into the wider HRZ. Visual effects of the proposed structures in the mid-ground of these views would be low, as any visual effects of the proposed small-scale

buildings will be mitigated, including through planting within the allocated LAMA. McDonnell Road is also located around 1m below the SGA which will assist in reducing visual effects of buildings. The built form with the SGA will be limited to an open sided pavilion and a glass house, with only 7% site coverage within the activity area.

### **Golf Facility Area**

The proposed golf facility building will accommodate some of the more functional golf requirements, such as golf training, tuition, and practice including a golf simulator, sale of golf equipment, a gym, as well as a place for golfers to informally socialise. The proposed building will be located to the north of the existing clubhouse where the original location of A1 was approved. The extent of this area is substantially smaller than A1 in this location. The GF building would be situated at a lower elevation than the clubhouse, adjacent to the golf course.

The building would be located near the base of the escarpment, facing in a northerly direction with landform confining the location to the south, west and east. The golf facility building would be limited to 6.5m in height with an RL 8.5m below the Clubhouse RL.

Visual effects would, therefore be largely internalised with only limited potential glimpses from elevated viewpoints on the northern Arrowtown escarpment at most<sup>2</sup>. The LAMA to the east of the golf facility extends north from the clubhouse area and is carried over from the current structure plan. Currently, large mature pine trees are within this LAMA which may need to be removed due to their age and location in vicinity of the golf course. Replacement planting would be included in this LAMA should the pines be removed. This will provide screening of a building from the east in this location to very low visual effects.

## **5.3 Homesite Additions**

Four of the homesites (HS1-4) in the current structure plan already contain existing dwellings, located in the western part of the site. One approved, currently unbuilt homesite (HS 5) is located in the south-eastern corner of the Site, close to the retirement village that was approved as a Special Housing Area along McDonnell Road.

The ten proposed additional homesites straddle two visual catchments and can be grouped as follows:

- Three homesites HS6-8 located to the west of HS 5 oriented towards McDonnell Road
- Six homesites HS9-14 located on higher-lying hummocky terrain to the southeast of existing HS4 (location of existing 9 hole golf course) oriented towards Hogans Gully/ Arrowtown – Lake Hayes Road
- One lower-lying homesite near Hogans Gully Road where an existing barn is located;

### **Homesites 6-8**

The proposed homesites are located along the southern escarpment on the Site in visually discrete areas that are separated from each other by landform. The proposed LAMA associated with these homesites builds on the landform spurs between sites with additional planting to frame the built development and to provide a visual context. All three sites are sunk below the ridgeline (with an RL lower than approved HS5) to ensure that a visual backdrop is provided and that buildings do not break the ridgeline when viewed from the Arrowtown escarpment.

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<sup>2</sup> Note: given that the GF activity area would replace A1 in this location with a reduced footprint, the built form has not been modelled in the screenshots shown in the graphic attachment.

While these buildings will be partially visible from Cotter Avenue/ Advance Terrace they will be at a distance of around 1km. Therefore, they will not be visually prominent and similar in appearance with a low level of visual effect when compared to approved HS5. The view towards these homesites from Arrowtown would include the existing retirement village and the future WBLP development on the adjacent site, with other existing residential buildings along the escarpment also visible.

While the frontage of these buildings would be visible from parts of the Arrowtown escarpment, suitable building platforms can be achieved in relation to the terrain by partly cutting them into the slope on the southern side of the buildings. It is considered that the existing HRZ controls on building materials and colours (rule 47.5.11) and framing vegetation would visually integrate the buildings into the context. It is considered that the visual effects of these individual dwellings would be low at most.

### **Homesites 9-14 and 16**

The proposed new homesites are located within hummocky terrain along the Hogans Gully escarpment/ slopes. The area that could accommodate these seven additional homesites would extend over around 700m in a south-easterly direction from the existing and established HS 4. The replacement of the 9 hole golf course in this area will provide the opportunity to locate the seven new buildings within semi-enclosed parts of the topography. The proposed homesites would be at a similar elevation to the existing water race that traverses the site in this area.

The top of the escarpment already contains a number of large dwellings within the Hogan Gully/ Arrowtown-Lake Hayes Road catchment but are barely visible from public viewpoints due to their elevated nature where the intervening terrain curtails views from below. The proposed seven homesites follow similar design principles to the existing buildings, as the building platforms will be shaped in a way that the buildings are not visually exposed to viewpoints below. The homesites also have LAMAs associated with them with specifically designed mounding and up to 2m high vegetation that would screen views from lower-lying areas while allowing long-distance views out to the west towards Lake Hayes and Slopehill. It is considered that from these long-distance viewpoints effects would be very low, if detectable at all.

From Arrowtown-Lake Hayes and Hogans Gully Roads there would be partial views to the rooflines and parts of some of the buildings above the screening landform and vegetation as shown in visual simulations for VP 5-9. In order to ensure that the LAMAs can be well integrated with the complex landform, a comprehensive revegetation framework is proposed, consisting of native plant species. This planting framework will tie together the appearance of the specific LAMAs that are associated with the individual homesites, and tie together and integrate the proposed development in this location and also the wider resort. The revegetation will follow the terrain with planting in gullies and on steep, south-facing escarpments.

The selection of the homesite locations has been undertaken with care and it is expected that buildings can be absorbed in these specific areas. All of the homesites are located in varied terrain amongst hummocks that can visually absorb the buildings with low visibility from Arrowtown-Lake Hayes and Hogans Gully Road. It is anticipated that parts of the proposed buildings on HS 11-16 will be visible from both roads at a distance of around 450- 850m. In some instances part of the roofline of HS11 and 13 will appear on the ridgeline with the Crown Terrace/ Mt Sale forming the backdrop to the view. However, the buildings would be seen in the context of a number of existing dwellings along this road, including the building currently located at 113 Hogans Gully Road. Visual effects of HS 11-16 are considered to be low-

moderate from sections of Hogans Gully Road with partial views to the proposed buildings from viewpoints between the Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road intersection and the proposed turn-off near HS 15. Views to HS 9-10 would only be glimpsed at most with low visual effects.

Elevated viewpoints along the Bendemeer escarpment would gain views into and across the site with HS 11-16 partially visible from this privately owned land. Given that it would be difficult to screen views to the buildings from these elevated viewpoints visual effects would range from very low to low-moderate from the residences at 58-110 Hogans Gully Road, depending on the orientation of their outlook and building location within the terrain/ vegetation.

It is considered that appropriate landscape outcomes that fit with the character of the Site can be achieved through careful design and siting of buildings, and that a visually cohesive development that integrates well with the landscape of the HRZ can be achieved through the structural planting framework.

### **Homesite 15**

The proposed HS 15 is located lower than the other homesites within this visual catchment (HS 9-14) and closer to Hogans Gully Road. An existing barn is currently located at this proposed homesite which is close to the proposed accessway turn-off. The proposed access road extends from here to HS 9 - 10 to east and to HS 11-14 to the west.

The homesite is relatively close to, but due to vegetation visually separated from an existing residence along Hogans Gully Road (No 63) which is oriented towards the western aspect. The rising terrain to the west of HS 15 partially curtails views from the road and the residence. Some mid to long distance views (around 750m) can be gained from Arrowtown- Lake Hayes Road, with visibility anticipated to be similar to the existing barn. Additional landform shaping is proposed within a LAMA to contain the building further from the south-west. Short-distance views from Hogans Gully Road (150-350m) would be mostly blocked by the existing and proposed landform. Overall, only glimpses to part of the building would be available from both roads, leading to low visual effects at most.

## 6.0 Assessment of Landscape and Visual Amenity Effects

The assessment of the landscape's ability to absorb change is based on its existing character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. The landscape character sensitivity/its ability to absorb change is based on judgments about sensitivity of aspects most likely to be affected. These aspects cover natural and cultural factors, quality/condition of the landscape and aesthetic factors. Visual sensitivity covers the visibility of an activity area as well as the nature and extent of population likely to visually experience the area (eg private/ public viewpoints).

It is worth noting that the landscape character of the Site has been substantially modified through the existing golf course development, which has created a manicured landscape appearance. While the landscape is aesthetically pleasant and well maintained, the landform and vegetation within the site are of a low naturalness. The openness of the landscape is

different to other rural landscapes due to the development anticipated under the existing HRZ, and the character differs from that of rural land with productive land uses.

The existing HRZ allows for built form located within parts of the Site where effects can be largely internalised with only limited/partial visibility of activity areas and homesites from outside. The same design principles were applied to the amendments to the activity areas and site selection of the additional homesites. The current District Plan Chapter contains a number of relevant policies that are relevant to the assessment of landscape and visual amenity effects (see Appendix 2 for relevant provisions from Chapter 47).

A number of measures were recommended to mitigate the visual and landscape effects of the proposed development, and/or to enhance landscape outcomes. These measures are proposed to form part of/be secured by the rules that apply to the new Zone through the LAMAs associated with specific homesites and activity areas, as well as a structural planting framework. The proposed measures include vegetation planting, earth contouring for screening, restrictions on building heights and on colours and materials used on buildings. The implementation of these measures has been taken into account when reaching a conclusion on the visual amenity and landscape effects of the proposal.

Under the policies relating to Objective 47.2.1 the plan requires all development to be located in accordance with the Structure Plan. Through Policy 47.2.1.1 the plan tries to ensure that:

- (a) Development integrates with the golf courses, the underlying topography and vegetation;*
- (b) Development is located where it can be absorbed, while achieving a predominance of open space and maintaining landscape character;*
- (c) Visibility of buildings from beyond the Zone, particularly from adjacent public roads and the Arrowtown escarpment, is mitigated through appropriate siting and landscaping (including LAMA);*
- (d) A high level of internal amenity within the Zone is achieved through careful siting of buildings and accessways, retention of expansive open space areas and the use of landscaping; and*
- (e) Reverse sensitivity effects on any adjacent farming operations are avoided.*

The need for the proposed changes has arisen from requirements in relation to the golf course design and planned disestablishment of the existing 9-hole golf course. The currently approved design and activity area/ homesite layout could not be implemented once the golf course is rerouted as planned, as the new course layout would give rise to actual or potential physical conflicts between golf and development activities. Care has been taken to ensure that the changes to activity areas support the current design principles. Any new or amended activity areas (relocated A1 and amended A2, A4, A5, A6, A10 and A11) will have largely internalised visual effects with low or very low visibility from beyond the zone. Where amendments to the structure plan were made LAMAs are also amended to provide the same level of mitigation as in the current structure plan.

The new homesites in the south-western part of the HRZ have been located in parts of the terrain where they can be absorbed with low visual effects from public viewpoints. While low-moderate visual effects may be experienced from some elevated private viewpoints on the

southern side of Hogans Gully Road, the landscape character would be maintained. The escarpment already contains a number of private residences within and outside of the HRZ. This general development pattern would be continued with a predominance of open space and only partial visibility of buildings set within the varied topography.

The maintenance of the internal amenity of the zone was a guiding principle for the careful design of the proposed amendments to the structure plan. Given that the golf course is one of the premier courses in the country the quality of the environment is a key consideration which has influenced the choice of location and design of built form in addition to the above considerations.

For the integration of the new homesites within both visual catchments (McDonnell Road and Hogans Gully Road) extensive structural planting is proposed to provide a visual context for the individually tailored homesite LAMAs into the wider HRZ. It was considered important to provide a cohesive design that ties the existing and proposed development together and to provide overall visual coherence with a similar landscape character and visual amenity across the entirety of the zone. The majority of the area will continue to be open space with clustered buildings arranged around the golf course layout. It is, therefore, considered that the proposed development is in accordance with Policy 47.2.1.13 which aims to maintain the landscape character and visual amenity values of the Zone<sup>3</sup>.

The controls on building height, light spill, external appearance, coverage and landscaping requirements have not changed under the current proposal compared to the current HRZ provisions. As required under Policy 47.2.1.14 adverse visual effects of development and associated infrastructure will be avoided or mitigated within and beyond the Zone. While the building height or relative elevation within the site is proposed to change for some of the activity areas, the visual effects of these amended development areas would be comparable to the development currently enabled under the HRZ.

The new proposed homesites are comparable in size, building coverage and building height to the existing and approved homesites with c. 800m<sup>2</sup> buildings for all of them, apart from HS 7 which provides for a 400m<sup>2</sup> sized building due to its constrained location. The same design controls relating to colour and material apply to these homesites to ensure their recessive appearance.

Overall, the amendments to the activity areas are of a size and nature that they are unlikely to be detectable from outside the site and aimed at a better integration of buildings with the golf course environment. The addition of homesites on the south-western side of the HRZ will lead to a change in this part of the site as buildings would be partially visible from some viewpoints in this visual catchment. However, it is considered that the proposal will be in character with the existing environment and create very low adverse effects to the values that underpin the existing landscape contained in the HRZ.

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<sup>3</sup> by:

*(a) Avoiding residential activities, visitor accommodation and other built development, except for small scale buildings associated with golf course operations and farming, in Activity Area G;*

*(b) Requiring the establishment of Landscape Amenity Management Areas (LAMAs) in accordance with the Structure Plan in Section 47.7 to ensure that the potential adverse effects of built form are avoided or mitigated, and to contribute to the amenity of the Zone; and*

*(c) Ensuring that buildings are located only in areas where the change can be absorbed and so that a predominance of open space is achieved across the Zone.*

## 7.0 Conclusions

The proposed amendments to the HRZ comprise of relatively small changes to the location and layout of approved activity areas which are required to enable an enhanced golf course design, as well as the inclusion of additional eleven homesites. The proposed homesites straddle two visual catchments with HS 6-8 located to the west of existing HS 5 within the catchment facing McDonnell Road, and HS 9-16 to the south-east of HS4 facing Hogans Gully Road. The building coverage in some of the approved/ proposed activity areas will be lower, leading to only a small overall increase of built form throughout the zone.

Together with the addition/ amendments to homesites and activity areas specifically designed planting areas are proposed, including LAMAs that aim to largely screen built form and SPAs comprising of extensive structural planting areas to visually integrate the proposed homesites into the wider development area. The existing HRZ allows for built form located within parts of the Site where effects can be largely internalised with only limited/partial visibility of activity areas and homesites from outside. The same design principles were applied to the amendments to the activity areas and site selection of the additional homesites. Overall, the amendments to the activity areas are of a size and nature that they are unlikely to be readily detectable from outside the site and aimed at a better integration of buildings with the golf course environment.

The new proposed homesites are comparable in size, building coverage and building height to the existing and approved homesites and design controls outlined in the zone provisions apply to all homesites to ensure their recessive appearance. It was considered important to provide a cohesive design that ties the existing and proposed development together and to provide overall visual coherence with a similar landscape character and visual amenity across the entirety of the zone. The majority of the area will continue to be open space with clustered buildings arranged around the golf course layout.

The addition of homesites on the south-western side of the HRZ will lead to a change in this part of the site as buildings would be partially visible from some viewpoints in this visual catchment, with low or low-moderate visual effects from some private and public viewpoints along Hogans Gully Road. However, it is considered that the proposal will be in character with the existing environment and create very low adverse effects to the visual amenity values that underpin the existing landscape contained in the HRZ.

The amendments to the HRZ will ensure that the design for the proposed golf course and built development will be visually integrated with the existing environment, while maintaining the high amenity of open space that contributes to the surroundings and the internal quality of the resort.

## Appendix 1 Assessment Methodology

### Method Statement

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22 November 2023

This assessment method statement is consistent with the methodology (high-level system of concepts, principles, and approaches) of 'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines', Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022. The assessment provides separate chapters to discuss landscape, visual and natural character effects where relevant, but is referred to throughout as a Landscape Effects Assessment in accordance with these Guidelines. Specifically, the assessment of effects has examined the following:

- *The existing landscape;*
- *The nature of effect;*
- *The level of effect; and*
- *The significance of effect.*

#### *The Existing Landscape*

The first step of assessment entails examining the existing landscape in which potential effects may occur. This aspect of the assessment describes and interprets the specific landscape character and values which may be impacted by the proposal alongside its natural character where relevant as set out further below. The existing landscape is assessed at a scale(s) commensurate with the potential nature of effects. It includes an understanding of the visual catchment and viewing audience relating to the proposal including key representative public views. This aspect of the assessment entails both desk-top review (including drawing upon area-based landscape assessments where available) and field work/site surveys to examine and describe the specific factors and interplay of relevant attributes or dimensions, as follows:

**Physical** –relevant natural and human features and processes;

**Perceptual** –direct human sensory experience and its broader interpretation; and

**Associative** – intangible meanings and associations that influence how places are perceived.

#### **Statutory and Non-Statutory Provisions**

The relevant provisions facilitating change also influence the consequent nature and level of effects. Relevant provisions encompass objectives and policies drawn from a broader analysis of the statutory context and which may anticipate change and certain outcomes for identified landscape values.

#### *The Nature of Effect*

The nature of effect assesses the outcome of the proposal within the landscape. The nature of effect is considered in terms of whether effects are positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in the context within which they occur. Neutral effects may also occur where landscape or visual change is benign.

It should be emphasised that a change in a landscape (or view of a landscape) does not, of itself, necessarily constitute an adverse landscape effect. Landscapes are dynamic and are constantly changing in both subtle and more dramatic transformational ways; these changes are both natural and human induced. What is important when assessing and managing landscape

change is that adverse effects are avoided or sufficiently mitigated to ameliorate adverse effects. The aim is to maintain or enhance the environment through appropriate design outcomes, recognising that both the nature and level of effects may change over time.

### *The Level of Effect*

Where the nature of effect is assessed as ‘**adverse**’, the assessment quantifies the level (degree or magnitude) of adverse effect. The level of effect has not been quantified where the nature of effect is neutral or beneficial. Assessing the level of effect entails professional judgement based on expertise and experience provided with explanations and reasons. The identified level of adverse natural character, landscape and visual effects adopts a universal seven-point scale from **very low** to **very high** consistent with Te Tangi a te Manu Guidelines and reproduced below.



### *Landscape Effects*

A landscape effect relates to the change on a landscape’s character and its inherent values and in the context of what change can be anticipated in that landscape in relation to relevant zoning and policy. The level of effect is influenced by the size or spatial scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of landscape change on the characteristics and values within the specific context in which they occur.

### *Visual Effects*

Visual effects are a subset of landscape effects. They are consequence of changes to landscape values as experienced in views. To assess where visual effects of the proposal may occur requires an identification of the area from where the proposal may be visible from, and the specific viewing audience(s) affected. Visual effects are assessed with respect to landscape character and values. This can be influenced by several factors such as distance, orientation of the view, duration, extent of view occupied, screening and backdrop, as well as the potential change that could be anticipated in the view as a result of zone / policy provisions of relevant statutory plans.

### *Natural Character Effects*

Natural Character, under the RMA, specifically relates to ‘*the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development*’. Therefore, the assessment of natural character effects only involves examining the proposed changes to natural elements, patterns and process which may occur in relevant landscape / seascape contexts.

As with assessing landscape effects, the first step when assessing natural character effects involves identifying the relevant physical and experiential characteristics and qualities which occur and may be affected by a proposal at a commensurate scale. This can be supported through the input of technical disciplines such as geomorphology, hydrology, marine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecology as well as input from tāngata whenua. An understanding of natural character considers the level of naturalness and essentially reflects the current condition of the environment assessed in relation to the seven-point scale. A higher level of natural character means the waterbody and/or margin is less modified and vice versa.

A natural character effect is a change to the current condition of parts of the environment where natural character occurs. Change can be negative or positive. The resultant natural character effect is influenced by the existing level of naturalness within which change is proposed; a

greater level of effect will generally occur when the proposal reduces the naturalness of a less modified environment. In short, the process of assessing natural character effects can be summarised as follows:

- Identify the characteristics and qualities which contribute to natural character within a relevant context and defined spatial scale(s), including the existing level of naturalness;
- Describe the changes to identified characteristics and qualities and the consequent level of natural character anticipated (post proposal); and
- Determine the overall level of effect based on the consequence of change.



### *The Significance of Effects*

Decision makers assessing resource consent applications must evaluate if the effect on individuals or the environment is less than minor<sup>4</sup> or if an adverse effect on the environment is no more than minor<sup>5</sup>. For non-complying activities, consent can only be granted if the s104D 'gateway test' is satisfied, ensuring adverse effects are minor or align with planning objectives. In these situations, the assessment may be required to translate the level of effect in terms of RMA terminology.

This assessment has adopted the following scale applied to relevant RMA circumstances<sup>6</sup> (refer to diagram below), acknowledging low and very low adverse effects generally equate to 'less than minor' and high / very high effects generally equate to significant<sup>7</sup>.



<sup>4</sup> RMA, Section 95E

<sup>5</sup> RMA, Section 95E

<sup>6</sup> Seven-point level of effect scale. Source: Te tangi a te Manu, Pg. 15

<sup>7</sup> The term 'significant adverse effects' applies to specific RMA situations, including the consideration of alternatives for Notices of Requirement and AEEs, as well as assessing natural character effects under the NZ Coastal Policy Statement.

## Appendix 2 Relevant HRZ Plan Provisions Chapter 47

### **47 The Hills Resort Zone**

#### **47.1 Resort Zone Purpose**

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##### **47.1.5 Structural Planting Framework**

Structural Planting Areas (SPAs) are identified on the Structure Plan and are located around Activity Areas HS6 to HS15. The SPAs work in conjunction with the LAMAs for these Activity Areas and comprise areas where planting is required to ensure a homogenous appearance of vegetation that visually connects the Activity Areas and integrates built development into the landscape. The SPAs do not provide a screening purpose but support the visual context for built development within this part of the Zone, and will enhance ecological values.

The Zone provisions require that the SPAs be established prior to the construction of buildings within Activity Areas HS6 to HS15.

The planting of SPAs follows the hummocky terrain landform in this southern area of the Zone, with tree planting in the gullies and shrubland species along steeper escarpments. The species for planting are limited to those indigenous species included at Section 47.9.

...

### **Policies**

#### **Structure Plan and Resort Development**

47.2.1.2 Require all development to be located in accordance with the Structure Plan contained in Section 47.7 to ensure that:

- (a) Development integrates with the golf courses, the underlying topography and vegetation;
- (b) Development is located where it can be absorbed, while achieving a predominance of open space and maintaining landscape character;
- (c) Visibility of buildings from beyond the Zone, particularly from adjacent public roads and the Arrowtown escarpment, is mitigated through appropriate siting and landscaping (including LAMA);
- (d) A high level of internal amenity within the Zone is achieved through careful siting of buildings and accessways, retention of expansive open space areas and the use of landscaping; and
- (e) Reverse sensitivity effects on any adjacent farming operations are avoided.

47.2.1.3 Development that is not located in accordance with the Structure Plan, where it will give rise to adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity values, is avoided.

### **Landscape and Amenity**

47.2.1.14 Maintain the landscape character and visual amenity values of the Zone, including the values described in 47.1.3, by:

(a) Avoiding residential activities, visitor accommodation and other built development, except for small scale buildings associated with golf course operations and farming, in Activity Area G;

(b) Requiring the establishment of Landscape Amenity Management Areas (LAMAs) and Structural Planting Areas (SPAs) in accordance with the Structure Plan in Section 47.7 to ensure that the potential adverse effects of built form are avoided or mitigated, and to contribute to the amenity of the Zone; and

(c) Ensuring that buildings are located only in areas where the change can be absorbed and so that a predominance of open space is achieved across the Zone.

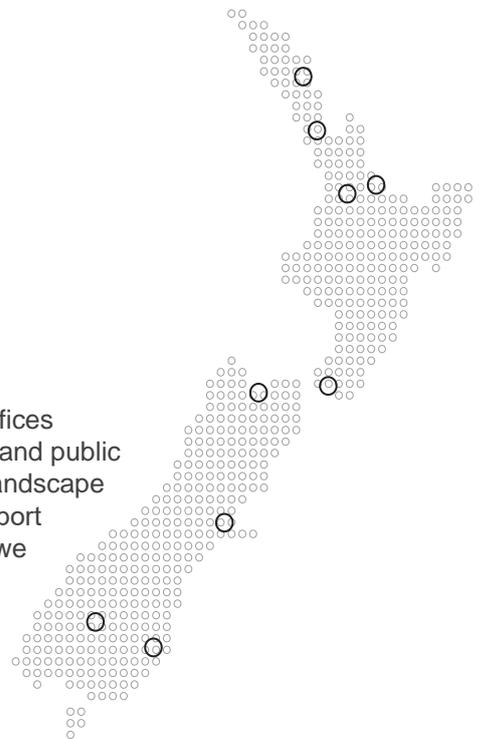
### **Buildings**

47.2.1.15 Avoid or mitigate adverse visual effects of development and associated infrastructure within and beyond the Zone through controls on building height, light spill, external appearance, coverage and landscaping requirements.

47.2.1.16 Maintain landscape character by ensuring that the design of all accesses to the Zone, and the cycleway / walkway, are visually recessive and have a non-urban character.

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