

Introduction

My name is Tim O'Sullivan, we farm within the area and are also involved in some land development projects

Following is my Owner's Statement, providing an overview of our proposal, setting out our vision, and addressing specific matters relating to the consent

Background

We farm in two areas in Central Otago. One is a finishing property at Waikerikeri, near Alexandra. The other a more extensive block at Luggate.

Our companies have undertaken a number of rural land developments in Central Otago over the past eight years.

The development philosophy is fairly simple as we apply a heavy focus on what is the highest & best use.

Wherever there is a suitable or sustainable productive use, we have sought to enable that. Typically this is done by bringing irrigation to formerly dryland areas and subdividing into more manageable blocks

The rural lifestyle subdivisions we have carried out to date have typically been on land that had limitations for Ag/Vit/Hort due to excessive contour. In basic terms the eyes are picked out for vit/hort and the remaining unproductive land is then considered for further subdivision as rural lifestyle blocks.

As farmers ourselves, it is our preference to retain land in productive use where possible.

Acquisition of Rocky Point

TKO properties acquired the 70ha Rocky Point property, along with the adjacent 130ha Bendigo Hills property, in 2022. These two titles, along with a number of other development blocks had been subdivided by the Perriams off the original Bendigo Station in the early 2000s, in anticipation of further development down into rural lifestyle blocks. The Rocky Point was centred around the RuRA2 zone and Rocky Point development area contained in the CODC District Plan.

Origin of the Rocky Point Development Area

The 21ha CODC-zoned development Area at Rocky Point was included in early iterations of the District Plan in the mid-1990s.

It coincided with the tenure review process for Bendigo Station. Our understanding from discussion with members of the Perriam family and others, along with a review of documentation available from that time, is that the Rocky Point Development Zone was the product of cooperation between The Perriam family, LandCorp and the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Central Otago District Council and DOC during that tenure review and District Plan establishment period.

It also coincided with the completion of the Clyde Dam and the filling of Lake Dunstan, with those stakeholders wanting to facilitate a variety of land uses around the lake. The Rocky Point development zone sought to enable a combination of dwellings, visitor accommodation and hospitality at the top of the lake, while ensuring the ongoing protection of the surrounding natural environment. It is those objectives our proposal now seeks to deliver upon.

The Rocky Point development philosophy

We believe that Central Otago lags behind Queenstown and Wanaka in offering unique developments, suitably and sympathetically situated within natural surrounds. The 8ha averaging subdivision rules in the CODC District Plan and lack of flexibility for better alternatives make this type of development near impossible. Rocky Point is a unique exception to this, where the plan-enabled Development Zone anticipates a more intensive spacing of dwellings, within a smaller footprint, at a suitable scale, within natural surroundings.

Central Otago also needs to attract tourist dollars. Again, we fall well behind Wanaka and Queenstown on this score.

There is a need to support our wine industry with complimentary tourism and hospitality facilities. Specifically, we believe there is unrealised opportunity for wine tourism and associated hospitality around Bendigo.

We see potential for further activation of the Bendigo Loop Rd – SH8 intersection. There may be opportunity arise in the future from the Tarras Airport. There is also the potential for significant industry and associated demand for staff and supporting services arising out of the Santana gold mining proposal.

Our Rocky Point development will complement all of these things.

Our proposal is specifically designed to protect and enhance the wonderful natural environment that surrounds Rocky Point. We have chosen those sites for development that are most suitable to receive built form without dominating the landscape. Our design seeks to minimise earthworks and impacts from installation of infrastructure. We are avoiding those areas within the Development Zone where building would lead to an undesirable level of effects. We have carefully selected a number of sites that extend beyond the development zone where effects of development can be managed to a suitable degree. We have worked extremely hard to come up with a scheme that will work and which is sensitive to our environment.

We are extremely proud to be enabling a development where approximately 90% of the land area is preserved and enhanced through formal conservation arrangements.

We are pleased to also incorporate some public walking access and amenity, including facilitating public access to and celebrating of our Central Otago gold mining heritage.

Existing farming use as an alternative to residential development

Although the land has lain fallow for several years in anticipation of this development, the current land use remains pastoral farming.

Rocky Point was, until this project began to take shape, part of the Bendigo Station farming system. We understand that it served as the holding paddock for large mobs of sheep coming off the hill waiting to go through the yards at the Homestead below at weaning, or shearing, or other times of the year. At those times the block was subject to significant stock pressure in the form of vegetation browse and the effects of sheep camping on open dry nobs. This has also lead to the spread of weeds via droppings.

At various times, this area has been decimated by rabbits. Ferral goats from the Dunstan Ranges pose a challenge even today.

In its current use the block can be top-dressed and oversown, promoting a conversion to more exotic grassland. Certain areas can be cultivated.

Looking at more intensive uses, portions of the block can be cleared and converted to viticulture, as has been done to the north and south of us.

If our consent application is not granted, it will be necessary to pursue some form of intensified viticulture or horticulture in order to generate some return on our investment.

In summary, we consider our proposal advances the purposes and zoning anticipated in the District Plan. It has a clear positive effect on the natural environment when compared against viable farming alternatives. It will protect and enhance 90% of the total land area in a natural vegetated state. It delivers cultural and social benefits through opportunities for tourism and hospitality. It has the potential to compliment surrounding primary industry.

We are proud to be enabling this development and look forward to your supporting our application by granting consent.

Thank you.