

RC230398 – Applicant DJ Jones and NR Searell Family Trust.

Application for Subdivision Consent Terrace Street,
Bannockburn

Supplementary Evidence Landscape & Visual Effects
Prepared for Central Otago District Council

21 February 2025

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Boffa Miskell Limited (BML) has been engaged by Central Otago District Council (CODC) to undertake a Peer Review, in relation to the application for subdivision consent to subdivide a Site, located on Terrace Street, Bannockburn, into 20 residential allotments with a minimum lot size of 1500m². In December 2023 RMM have prepared a report assessing the effects on visual amenity values, character and the natural character values of the Bannockburn inlet of locating buildings within the BLR area.
- 1.2 The intent of my peer review prepared in April 2024 was to confirm the Landscape and Visual Effects of the proposal based on the assessment provided by the applicant.
- 1.3 The RMM report provided an assessment methodology, including a 7 point scale of effects from very low to very high. This is considered appropriate and in line with best practice¹. I adopted the same scale in my peer review and in this supplementary evidence for comparability of the degree of effects.
- 1.4 While the RMM assessment in December 2023 provided ZTVs, visual simulations were recommended in my peer review to get a better understanding of the visual effects anticipated. The commissioners have subsequently requested visual simulations and they were recently provided by the applicant (prepared by Method Visual, dated 7 Feb 2025), together with a supplementary statement of evidence (Tony Milne Landscape Architect, dated 10 Feb 2025).
- 1.5 The visual simulations modelled the buildings within the proposed platforms, at the height and size as proposed through the conditions offered by the applicant and supported by the CODC reporting officer Kirstyn Royce (see S42A report).
- 1.6 The methodology statement provided with the visual simulations contains a detailed outline of the method applied to the preparation of model, photography and viewpoint matches. I can confirm that the visual simulations provided by Method Visual were prepared in line with best practice requirements and it can be assumed that they provide an accurate depiction of the maximum built form enabled under the proposal. The visual simulations demonstrate the anticipated visual effect, that the depicted proposal will have on the selected photographic views shown in late Spring/early Summer. The height of the mitigation planting in the views has been shown after 10 years of growth. As noted below, additional planting appears to be shown on the visual simulations that is not required under the proposed conditions.

2.0 Visual Effects Assessment based on Visual Simulations

- 2.1 The RMM visual effects assessment (dated Dec 2023) assessed the proposal from eleven public viewpoints. In February 2025 visual simulations were provided from six of these Viewpoints (Viewpoints 3-8: Cairnmuir Road, Lake Dunstan Trail,

¹ Te Tangi a Te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

Bannockburn Boat Ramp, Kawarau Bannockburn Inlet, Bannockburn Inlet Recreation Reserve, Patersons Road). I consider that these six viewpoints are representative of a range of viewing distances and angles to illustrate the effects of buildings located within the Building Restriction Line (BRL) on Lots 13-20.

- 2.2 I checked the findings of my peer review against the visual simulations that were now provided. Below I outline my conclusions that I have drawn from review of the visual simulations and whether I agree with the findings that Mr Milne provided in his supplementary evidence.

2.3 Viewpoint 3 Cairnmuir Road (near Carrick Winery & Vineyards)

- 2.3.1 I agree with Mr Milne's assessment, in line with my previous assessment, that the degree of **visual effects from this viewpoint would be no more than low-moderate and adverse**. This viewpoint provides a similar view to the Dunstan cycle trail and a range of private residences around the Bannockburn Inlet. The removal of buildings on Lot 30 (compared to the previous application) has reduced the visual effect of buildings appearing along the most prominent part of the escarpment.
- 2.3.2 I note that the proposed planting on Lot 30 would not provide any visual mitigation for Lots 15-17 that are clearly visible on the escarpment. The visual simulation shows planting below and adjacent to buildings on Lots 15-20 that visually integrates them on the otherwise open slope. It is recommended to require implementation of native planting as an additional condition, undertaken in a similar manner as shown on the visual simulations to provide texture and soften the appearance of built form. I consider that the planting should extend towards the gully north of Lot 15 (within Lot 40) with natural outlines that follows the underlying landform.

2.4 Viewpoint 4 Lake Dunstan Trail near Carrick Winery

- 2.4.1 I agree with Mr Milne's assessment, in line with my previous assessment, that the degree of **visual effects from this viewpoint would be no more than low-moderate and adverse**. This viewpoint provides a similar view to Viewpoint 3 above. I note the same as for VP3 in relation to additional mitigation planting required between, around and below building platforms on Lots 15-17.

2.5 Viewpoint 5 Bannockburn Boat Ramp

- 2.5.1 Overall, I agree with Mr Milne's assessment, in line with my previous assessment that the **degree of visual effects is low-moderate and adverse** from this viewpoint. While the proposed planting on Lot 30 mitigates the visual effects of several dwellings appearing along the ridgeline of the escarpment, the built form on Lot 15 would be clearly visible, introducing residential development into a view that currently does not include dwellings. I consider that planting on the northern and eastern side of Lot 15 would be essential to visually integrate this dwelling.

2.6 Viewpoint 6 Kawarau Bannockburn Inlet (South of Recreation Reserve)

- 2.6.1 Currently no existing buildings are visible from this viewpoint which is located around 200m from the proposed Site. I concur with Mr Milne's assessment, in line with my previous assessment, that the **degree of visual effects is moderate and adverse** from this viewpoint. I consider visibility from this viewpoint to lead to the highest visual effects, where built form on Lots 15-17 would be clearly visible on the escarpment. From this viewpoint the stepped built form appears particularly

prominent due to the multitude of building components. In my view, this gives the buildings on each platform the appearance of a multi-storey townhouse development which is out of character in the Bannockburn environment. I, therefore, recommend limiting the overall height of the built form (lowest to highest point) as well as the currently proposed building height of 5m that follows the terrain in a stepped manner.

- 2.6.2 The proposed planting on Lot 30 assists in avoiding views to dwellings located on Lots 10-14 on the skyline. Overall, the visual effect of the proposal is considered to be more than minor from this viewpoint due to the relatively short viewing distance and clear view of built form on Lots 15-17.

2.7 Viewpoint 7 Bannockburn Inlet Recreation Reserve

- 2.7.1 Currently, there are no existing dwellings visible from this viewpoint. In my peer review I considered that the degree of visual effects is up to moderate and adverse from this viewpoint, depending on the exact viewing location. While I assumed that it would be likely that the buildings on Lots 15-20 will break the skyline in some views, the **visual simulations demonstrate that visual effects of these buildings would be low-moderate at most**, with only the dwelling on Lot 15 visible near the skyline. I agree with Mr Milne's assessment in this respect.
- 2.7.2 Lots 30 and 40 appear as the foreground of the elevated landform from this viewpoint and the removal of buildings on this part of the Site have assisted in minimising visual effects from this viewpoint.

2.8 Viewpoint 8 Patersons Road

- 2.8.1 I agree with Mr Milne's evidence that the proposal will "*contribute to a minor loss in the visual simplicity of the site as perceived from this location.*" However, the proposed planting and built form is generally in character with the existing built form in Bannockburn already visible in this view. However, I note as above, that in this view the buildings on Lots 15-17 in particular appear as a multi-storey development due to the sloping building platform and the stepped form of buildings that is limited by a maximum roof elevation and building height for each component.
- 2.8.2 In my view, the **degree of visual effects will be no more than low - moderate and adverse** from this viewpoint, based on the assumption that the proposed planting and the planting shown in the visual simulations around the building on Lots 15-20, would be implemented as part of the application. In addition, I recommend limiting the overall height of built form to avoid the appearance of a multi-storey townhouse development on the escarpment within these lots.

2.9 Conclusion

- 2.10 I reviewed the six visual simulations provided for the viewpoints outlined above (VP3-8) and checked the visibility and potential visual effects described in the supplementary evidence in the context of the surrounding landscape modifications. Based on the site visits in 2021 and 2024, the viewpoints selected for visual simulations are considered appropriate in location to enable an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects from these identified areas.
- 2.11 Mr Milne in his supplementary evidence concludes that "*views near to the site from the East, from around the Bannockburn Inlet, Cairnmuir Road and the surrounding rural environment (Viewpoints 3-8) are most relevant and potentially most impacted,*

as demonstrated from the key viewpoints identified. Having analysed the visual simulations I consider that the effects on visual amenity overall are low-moderate to moderate from these viewpoints.” As outlined individually for each viewpoint above, I agree with Mr Milne’s findings and his assessment of level of effect.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 I generally agree with Mr Milne’s overall assessment, including that the visual effects from the east around the Bannockburn Inlet are, moderate from some viewpoints where buildings would break the skyline. While it is correct that views from the north and north-east are limited or only occur at long viewing distances, the views from the east are at short and mid viewing distances with elevated buildings potentially appearing on the skyline from specific nearby viewpoints around Bannockburn Inlet.
- 3.2 I have two additional recommendations for conditions that would assist in reducing the visual effects and ensuring that they would not exceed those shown in the visual simulations.

Overall Height of Built Form (Lots 15-20)

- 3.3 Based on the visual simulations I note that the built form on Lots 15-20 appears as a multi-storey townhouse style development, as it follows the slope with multiple building components. The maximum elevation of the built form on these lots is set through a condition, together with a maximum building height of 5m above ground, requiring a stepped built form that follows the terrain. From the contour plans provided by RMM (Graphic attachment p 10 and 11) it appears that the maximum building height is set at the top elevation of the building platforms (265masl for HS15-19 and 265masl for HS20) which generally prevents the building substantially breaking the skyline in views from the east².
- 3.4 I support a maximum roof height of 265masl building height of 5m above existing ground for lots 15-19 (and 266masl for Lot 20) and 4.2m height and 271masl for Lots 11-14, to encourage a built form that follows the terrain through broken built form that reduces visual bulk. In general, I also support this stepped approach where built form follows the terrain, minimising the requirement for substantial earthworks.
- 3.5 In my view, it would, however, be **preferable for Lots 15-17 which are the visually most prominent, if the built form was no more than 8m in total height from lowest ground level to top roof level to avoid the appearance of three storey townhouses** as shown on the visual simulations (see extract below).

² The proposed maximum building heights and roof elevations appear to be tailored to the terrain to reduce visual prominence of buildings. I consider the proposed 4.2 and 5m height limit for buildings on Lots 11-20 important to reduce effects of buildings appearing on the skyline.



Figure 1: Extract from Visual Simulation from Viewpoint 8 (Paterson Road) showing the appearance of a multi-storey townhouse development on Lots 15-17.

Additional Planting (Lots 15-20)

- 3.6 Based on the review of the visual simulations it appears that the proposed planting would generally ensure that buildings do not appear on the skyline after 10 years of growth. No simulations were provided to illustrate the effects of the buildings prior to mitigation planting maturing. It is assumed that the effects of some buildings, in particular those on Lots 15-17 would be visually more prominent following their establishment while vegetation along the top of the escarpment and between and below building platforms establishes.
- 3.7 **I note that the current proposal does not require any planting between and below building platforms 15-20, however, the visual simulations depict relatively large planting areas.** In my view, the planting visually integrates the built form into the landscape and softens the appearance of the buildings.
- 3.8 In my view, it is essential to provide planting areas between and below these sloping sites (Lots 15-20). While the goal does not need to be full screening of these buildings, I consider that a comprehensive structural planting area around the building platforms is essential to avoid the built form appearing visually prominent on the open escarpment.



Figure 2: Extract from Visual Simulation from Viewpoint 6 (Kawarau Bannockburn Inlet) showing the integrating effect of planting between and below the building platforms on Lots 15-17. This planting should be required as an additional condition.

- 3.1 **I, therefore, recommend an additional condition that requires comprehensive native planting below and between building platforms on Lots 15-20, similar to the planting within Lot 30, to ensure that visual integration of these buildings can be achieved over the longer term.** It is considered important that the planting on these lots does not create stark, unnatural lines along boundaries, but to provide visual texture in outlines that follow the underlying landform. I, therefore, recommend that the planting extends to the gully to the north of Lot 15 within Lots 30 and 40 and to provide organic outlines.
- 3.2 I consider that from most viewpoints the proposed development would be viewed in the context of existing dwellings within Bannockburn. The only viewpoints that currently do not include visible built development are the close-up ones along Bannockburn Inlet (VP 6 and 7). From these viewpoints the proposal would not appear as an extension to built form on Terrace Street, but as an introduction of completely new development.
- 3.3 **In order to visually integrate the built form in views from the Bannockburn Inlet, I recommend limiting the overall height of built form for Lots 15-17 and implementation of planting between and below Lots 15-20 as described above.** Overall, I consider that the effects on the landscape and natural character of the Bannockburn Inlet would be minor (low-moderate) and acceptable in the context of the existing development within Bannockburn, if these additional conditions were to be included to achieve a reduction of bulk in the built form and visual integration through planting.
- 3.4 The mitigating effect of the proposed planting on Lot 30 for VP 6 and 7 is likely to take around 10 years due to the wide spacing (3m) of plants. In the time between establishment of buildings and maturing of proposed (and additionally recommended) vegetation, effects will reduce over time to the level outlined in my assessment above.