

RC230398 – Applicant DJ Jones and NR Searell Family Trust.  
Application for Subdivision Consent Terrace Street, Bannockburn  
Hearing Summary of Landscape & Visual Effects Assessment  
Prepared for Central Otago District Council  
Yvonne Pfluger

5 March 2025

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 I was engaged by Central Otago District Council (CODC) to undertake a Peer Review, in relation to the application for resource consent lodged with the Council in April 2019 for a subdivision on the Site comprising 38 residential lots (RC190154). The application was accompanied by a Landscape/ Visual Assessment (LVA) and visual simulations prepared by RMM. As part of my LVA peer review (dated 23 July 2021) I included a number of recommendations that would, in my view, reduce the landscape and visual effects of the application. My recommendations included deletion of four lots that were located on the current Lot 30 due to their visual dominance on the skyline and adverse landscape and natural character effects. This was accompanied by a number of other recommendations relating to building size and elevation/ height, materials and colours, curtilage restrictions and planting. I provided my report to CODC who subsequently provided it to the applicant as part of the normal consenting process. I had no interaction with the applicant during or after the preparation of my peer review. In 2021 I was informed that the same applicant had lodged a new application (RC230398) for the same site. As stated in my recent peer review (dated 3 April 2024), I consider that many of my key concerns with the previous application were addressed through more refined design, layout and conditions. Throughout both processes I was engaged by CODC as an independent peer reviewer, with no advisory role in relation to the applicant.
- 1.2 Prior to the hearing I undertook a site visit with the surveyed height poles erected on the sites and visited the viewpoints that visual simulations were prepared from, as well as other surrounding areas and the site itself. The site visit affirmed my conclusions regarding visual effects that I outlined in my peer review and supplementary evidence which was based on a review of the visual simulations provided by the applicant in February 2025.

## 2.0 Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment<sup>1</sup>

- 2.1 I outline in detail in my peer review and supplementary evidence my assessment of visual effects from each viewpoint identified by the applicant. I also note how this relates to the level of effect assessed by Mr Milne (RMM) for the applicant which is standard practice in peer reviews for Councils.
- 2.2 As outlined in my peer review/ supplementary evidence I consider the visual effects from most of the selected viewpoints (VP3-8) to be low-moderate (minor) with moderate (more than minor) effects from Viewpoints 6 (South of Bannockburn Recreation Reserve). The most relevant viewpoints are located within the Bannockburn Inlet area to the east of the proposal and in relatively close proximity to the site (around 200-900m distance).
- 2.3 I note 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 on the Bannockburn terrace/escarpment are the close-up ones along the western side of 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.
- 2.4 I note that a number of residential buildings are visible around the southern and eastern side of Bannockburn Inlet from the road, carparks and cycle trail and that residential development is not an unexpected element in this landscape. I arrived at my conclusions regarding landscape and visual effects based on the potential visibility of the proposed development in the context of the existing landscape character/ values and modifications.
- 2.5 Ms Steven in her conclusion considers that *"fundamentally the issue is the change in land use which is inconsistent with the purpose of the BLR; with preserving the natural character of water body margins; and protecting the open natural character of skylines, ridgelines and prominent slopes"* (para 166b) and that *"the role of the Site as part of open natural skyline/ridgeline and prominent slope, and as open rural surrounds to Bannockburn as valued rural landscape characteristics has not been adequately recognised"* (para 166iv). I consider that the terrace/ escarpment that the site is situated on, displays similar landscape values and character to other comparable landforms around Bannockburn and the Inlet area, without being a particularly significant landscape feature beyond the characteristics identified in the

---

### <sup>1</sup> Landscape Effects

Change itself is not an effect: landscapes change constantly. It is the implications of change for a landscape's values that is the effect. A landscape effect takes account of the proposed change to a landscape's character and values (as identified across relevant landscape dimensions) and in the context of what change can be anticipated in that landscape as a result of relevant statutory provisions. The level of effect can also be influenced by the size or spatial scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of landscape effects 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 where it may be visible 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, backdrop etc.

RMM report. In my view, the most sensitive parts of the site are contained within Lots 30 and 40 which are maintained as open space under the proposal.

- 2.6 I attached the relevant page from the Central Otago District Rural Review Landscape Assessment prepared by LA4 Landscape Architects in 2007. I understand this assessment informed the identification of Outstanding Natural Landscapes (under RMA S6b) and Significant Amenity Landscapes (under RMA S7c) in the current Central Otago District Plan. While this study identified the terraces around Benidgo and Lowburn/ Sugar Loaf as significant landscape features, the subject site was identified as "moderate sensitivity".

### 3.0 Natural Character Effects Assessment<sup>2</sup>

- 3.1 While Lots 15-20 would be visible along the terrace edge from elevated viewpoints, they are set back from the Kawarau Inlet above Shepherd's Creek. When within the inlet area a number of buildings are visible in various directions in similar proximity and visibility to the proposed lots. I consider the existing natural character values of Bannockburn Inlet to be low to moderate due to the predominance of exotic plant species, and presence of man-made structures, trails and roads.
- 3.2 In my view, low to moderate adverse effects would mostly be of an experiential nature in relation to natural landform patterns and openness. In light of the proposed setback of the closest proposed building platform of over 250m (and associated difference in elevation) I consider that the physical effects on the natural elements and processes of the Bannockburn Inlet would be very low. Overall, the natural character effects are, in my opinion, appropriate in the context of the existing development within the Bannockburn inlet area.

### 4.0 Conditions

- 4.1 As outlined in my peer review, I consider the conditions proposed by the applicant essential to reduce the landscape and visual effects to an acceptable level.
- 4.2 In my supplementary evidence I recommend the implementation of the planting as shown in the visual simulations. I incorrectly referred to the Masterplan that was included in the RC application for RC230398 which does not show this planting between and below Lots 15-20. I subsequently realised that this planting is shown on

---

<sup>2</sup> *Natural Character Effects*

Natural Character, under the RMA, specifically concerns *'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 involves examining the proposed changes to natural elements, patterns and processes which may occur in relevant landscape contexts. This involves identifying the relevant physical and experiential characteristics and qualities which occur and may be affected by a proposal.

the "Proposed Subdivision Plan" on page 5 of Mr Milne's evidence dated 27/09/2024. My recommendation is, therefore that the planting is implemented as shown on this plan with a small extension around the gully area within Lot 40 to the north of Lot 15.

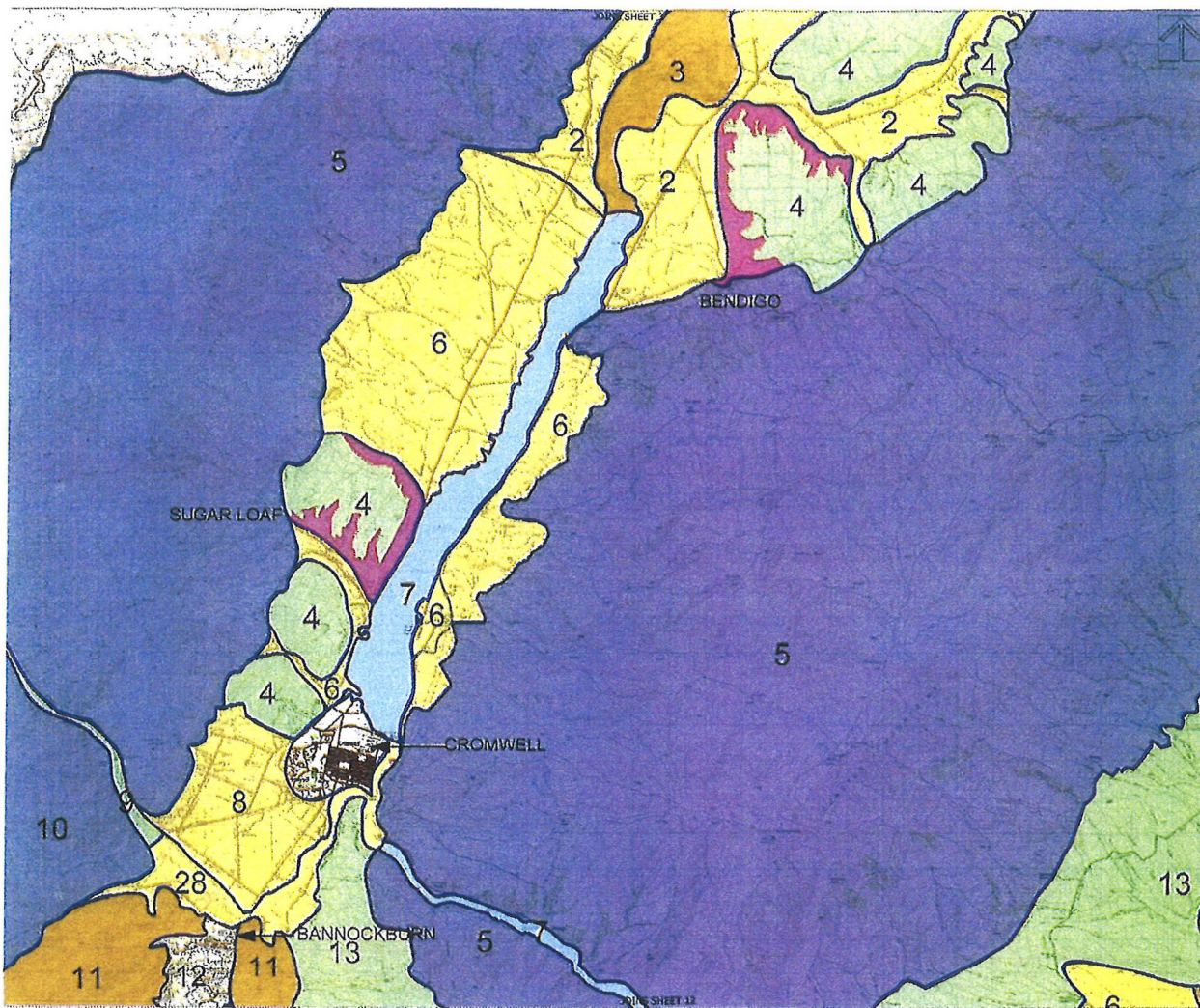
- 4.3 In my April 2024 peer review I recommended planting at a density of 1.5m spacing and I note that this is now proposed in the Landscape Maintenance Plan dated 27/09/24.
- 4.4 Ms Steven in her evidence recommends the addition of several other native plant species (paragraph 119). I support the addition of these species to the planting palette as they would provide for more species diversity and could assist with planting in vicinity of the proposed residential dwellings where kanuka and manuka planting may be inappropriate due to fire risk. Based on recent experience with QLDC, I recommend that no species listed as "high or moderate flammability" by FENZ<sup>3</sup> should be planted within at least 10m of residential buildings. Should fire risk in relation to planting be considered an important issue by the commissioners, I would recommend a specialist fire assessment that takes into account landform and prevailing winds.
- 4.5 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 my supplementary evidence I recommend for Lots 15-17 which are the visually most prominent, that the built form should be 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.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.checkitsalright.nz/reduce-your-risk/low-flammability-plants>

**Appendix 1: Relevant Map CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT RURAL REVIEW  
Landscape Assessment  
Prepared by LA4 Landscape Architects 2007**

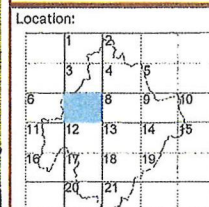




Project  
Central Otago District  
Landscape Assessment

KEY	Rating
	Extreme sensitivity
	High sensitivity
	Significant sensitivity
	Moderate sensitivity
	Limited sensitivity
	Low sensitivity
	Significant landscape feature
	Landscape unit number

Information:  
Scale: 1: 100,000 @A3  
Date: 20.12.07  
Issue: J



MAP 2: Landscape Units  
2.7