

RC230398 – Applicant DJ Jones and NR Searell Family Trust.

Application for Subdivision Consent Terrace Street,  
Bannockburn

Peer Review of Landscape & Visual Effects Assessment  
Prepared for Central Otago District Council

3 April 2024

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## 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 Lot 4 into 20 residential allotments with a minimum lot size of 1500m<sup>2</sup>. The subject site is located on Terrace Street, Bannockburn and legally described as Lot 4 DP 339137.
- 1.2 The Landscape and Visual Amenity Effects Assessment (Appendix F Landscape Values Assessment, dated 19 December 2023) has been prepared by RMM Landscape Architects. Assessment photos and zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) maps have been included as a separate document (Graphic Attachment to Landscape Values Assessment, dated 15 January 2024) to support the assessment. No Visual Simulations were provided.
- 1.3 An application for resource consent was lodged with the Council in April 2019 for a subdivision on the Site comprising 38 lots for residential activity, roads and a reserve lot (RC190154). The previous application was for a non-complying activity resource consent because the minimum lot size of 1500m<sup>2</sup> and average lot size of 2000m<sup>2</sup> was not achieved. The peer review of this previous landscape effects assessment was also undertaken by Yvonne Pfluger (BML) and the RMM Landscape assessment for this current application refers to the recommendations made in the previous peer review.
- 1.4 The intent of this peer review is to confirm the Landscape and Visual Effects of the current proposal based on the assessment provided by the applicant. This has been based on a desk top review, site visit in 2021 and 2024, consideration of the Central Otago District Plan and includes identification of any issues for consideration or key issues missed.
- 1.5 The site is located within the Residential Resource Area 4 (RRA4) under the CODC Operative District Plan (ODP), Map 8 and partially within the Building Line Restriction (BLR).
- 1.6 The following potential landscape and visual effects were identified in the RMM report as relevant to this proposal:
  - a. Effects associated with the breach of the BLR.
  - b. Effects on the character, amenity, and settlement pattern within Bannockburn.
  - c. Effects on the natural character of the Kawarau River and Bannockburn Inlet.
  - d. Effects on the site's values including the open and rural character and the perceived ruggedness and naturalness of the site's landforms and vegetation patterns.
  - e. Effects on the heritage and recreation values of the site. Refer to Kopuwai Consulting report for a full commentary on archaeological and heritage matters.
  - f. Visual amenity effects from public places within the surrounding area, particularly from locations east of the site, as well as from Bannockburn township and neighbouring private properties.

## 2.0 Peer Review Approach

### 2.1 Desktop Review

2.1.1 Review of the CODC planning framework relevant to visual and landscape effects.

2.1.2 Review of the relevant report and findings as submitted as part of the application, including:

- Methodology used for assessment and preparation of graphic material, including ZTV analysis;
- Selection of visibility assessment viewpoints;
- Landscape context and site description and analysis;
- Landscape and visual effects assessment in relation to the relevant statutory matters;
- Assessment undertaken to evaluate the cumulative visual impacts; and
- Feasibility and effectiveness of any proposed mitigation (including the proposed planting and conditions).

### 2.2 Site Investigations

2.2.1 For the peer review of application RC190154 Yvonne Pfluger (BML Landscape Architect) conducted a site visit on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and undertook the following assessments:

- Review of the existing landscape character of the site and wider landscape context, including settlement within and around Bannockburn;
- Review of potential visibility of the proposal from the surrounding landscape, including visit to viewpoints identified in the assessment report;
- On-site investigation of any potentially impacted areas highlighted from the desk top review.

2.2.2 The RMM graphic attachment provided with the current application contained photos taken between 2020-2022. In order to verify the validity of findings in the RMM report, a brief site visit was undertaken on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 for the preparation of this peer review report. This confirmed that the existing environment in the immediate surroundings of the site has not changed substantially since then.

### 3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 The Applicant seeks subdivision consent to subdivide Lot 4, a 17.6 ha parcel of land, into 20 residential lots with a minimum size of 1500m<sup>2</sup>. In addition to these lots, the proposal includes the following:
- Lot 30 is a proposed recreation reserve of 0.41 ha.
  - Lot 40 is a balance lot of 4.44 ha to remain in the ownership of the Applicant or be transferred to a private landowner to undertake grazing or other rural activities.
  - Lot 50 is a balance lot of 7.82 ha which will remain in the ownership of the Applicant.
  - Lot 51 is an additional balance lot which will contain infrastructure that may be vested in the future.
  - Lot 100 shall be vested with Council and includes a network of interconnected roads, infrastructure, and shared pedestrian and cycle paths to provide a high degree of permeability and connectivity through the subdivision and to the proposed public reserve.
- 3.2 The revised proposed subdivision has taken into account feedback provided on the original application RC190154, and comprises the following elements compared to the previous proposal:
- The minimum lot size of 1500m<sup>2</sup> and average lot size of 2000m<sup>2</sup> has been achieved, this complies with the anticipated residential density of the RRA(4) zone.
  - An originally proposed road located along the western boundary of the site adjoining 34 and 36 Terrace Street has been removed. The existing access and right of way will not be affected and access will be via a road located on the northern side of Lots 2, 3 and 6. There are no new vehicle access rights at this location.
  - Lots 5-8 as shown in Figure 9 have been removed providing greater visual relief to the existing properties on the southern side of Terrace Street.
  - RC190154 would have resulted in 24 dwellings within the BLR. This application would result in 12 dwellings within the BLR (8 lots entirely within the BLR and 4 lots partially within the BLR). Those 12 dwellings located within the BLR area will be subject to controls limiting building height, location, coverage and colours and materials (see below).
- 3.3 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. The following mitigation measures are recommended by RMM and these form part of the volunteered conditions of consent and design aspects of the subdivision:
- On Lots 4,5,13,14, 15 – 20, a building platform of 500 m<sup>2</sup> shall be identified with all buildings and associated curtilage restricted to be located within the

building platform areas. No built development shall be permitted outside the building platform, such as clothes lines, swimming pools or other activities generally associated with a curtilage area.

- For all of Lots 1-20, a maximum built coverage of 300m<sup>2</sup>. Should any dwellings be two storeys, the maximum footprint for the ground floor will be 200m<sup>2</sup>.
- The access to Lot 6 shall be designed to limit the extent of earthworks required, and as far as practicable off the ridgeline.
- Exterior cladding shall be limited to timber (vertical or horizontal), schist, or corrugated iron in one of the following Colorsteel colours: Lichen, Sandstone Grey, Lignite, Ironsand, FlaxPod, Grey Friars, New Denim Blue.
- Roofing shall be constructed of corrugated iron in one of the of the following Colorsteel colours (or similar with a light reflectance value (LRV) of the less than 12%): Lignite, Ironsand, FlaxPod, Grey Friars, New Denim Blue.
- Fencing at lot boundaries shall be limited to 1.2 m high unpainted post and rail, post and wire or waratah and wire fencing. The addition of rabbit wire mesh is encouraged.
- Subdivision roading shall be asphalt or chip seal and have no kerb and channel.
- Shared paths within the recreation reserve and road reserve shall be local compacted gravel and/or schist stone.
- Planting for the road reserve, recreation reserve and private lots shall be undertaken in accordance with the planting palette in Appendix A of the RMM Assessment.
- Lot 30, planting shall be undertaken to provide visual screening of the built form on lots 5, 10-14 from viewpoints east of the site. Planting shall comprise:
  - Mitigation planting will consist of 40% *Kunzea serotina*, 40% *Leptospermum scoparium*, and 20% *Coprosma propinqua*.
  - Plants will be supplied at PB3 size or larger, and planted at a spacing of 3m centres to achieve sufficient coverage.
  - All plants shall have a slow-release fertiliser, wool mulch collar, and plant guard installed to deter rabbit and hare browsing.
  - A temporary irrigation system shall be installed and operation for the first three years from the date of planting to ensure quick and healthy establishment of plants.
  - All planting shall have been installed and healthy for a period of no less than three months from the date of planting prior to Council certification inspection.
- On Lots 1- 20 Buildings shall be subject to the following maximum heights:

Lot Number(s)	Maximum Building Height	Maximum Roof Elevation	Notes
1, 2, 3	5m	269 masl	
4, 6	4.2m	269.2 masl	
5	4.2m	270.2 masl	
7, 8, 9	7.5m	269 masl	
10	5m	269.5 masl	
11, 12, 13, 14	4.2m	271 masl	Buildings to be stepped with grade
15, 16, 17, 18, 19	5m	265 masl	Buildings to be stepped with grade
20	5m	266 masl	Buildings to be stepped with grade

#### 4.0 Site and Landscape Context Description

- 4.1 The Site is 17.614ha in area with ‘Slaughterhouse Hill’ and the Kawarau River to the north, Cairnmuir Road and the Bannockburn Inlet to the east, Terrace Street to the south/west and Bannockburn Road to the west.



Figure 1 sourced from Landscape Assessment report graphic attachment (RMM, Sheet 7, 2024) showing landscape feature/ key place names



- 4.2 During the site visit in July 2021, the surrounding landscape was assessed and based on this, the landscape context/baseline and site description outlined in the RMM assessment is considered accurate. The site visit undertaken in 2024 for this peer review confirmed that the site and immediate surroundings have not undergone substantial change since 2021. The description of the environment includes the wider receiving environment of Bannockburn and surrounds (Section 4).
- 4.3 The Site is located on the eastern end of the Bannockburn township, south-west of Cromwell separated by the Kawarau River. The RMM assessment correctly states that *“Bannockburn is surrounded by the rugged, semiarid and somewhat barren high-country environment, shaped in geological time by a combination of glaciation and fluvial processes and more recently human activity in the form of mining, agriculture, viticulture, and horticulture.”* The rugged high-country landscape, which surrounds Bannockburn, contrasts with the lower terraces and hillslopes near Cairnmur Road and the Cromwell Basin, which consist predominately of orchards and vineyards.
- 4.4 The report describes the settlement pattern as follows: *“Rural lifestyle properties and holiday homes are located throughout the working rural landscape with a greater concentration of dwellings and built form in and proximity to the historic township of Bannockburn. This concentration of dwellings extends in an east-west direction along Terrace and Lawrence Street to the east and Domain and Hall Road to the west. The pattern of settlement consists of large lot residential varying in size from 1500-3000m<sup>2</sup> with some recent subdivision of lots at around 1000m<sup>2</sup> closer to the historic town centre.”* While the exact lot sizes were not checked in detail for this report, I generally agree with this description in relation to the density of dwellings in terms of the overall settlement pattern.
- 4.1 The RMM assessment provides a detailed description of the landform for the Site and I agree with these descriptions on the whole: *“landforms and terrain of the subject site are varied, consisting of alluvial schist gravels overlying schist rock outcrops and sedimentary deposits. The landforms are significantly modified due to previous human occupation and use as a mining site. The west part of the Site, adjacent to Bannockburn Road, is generally flat and open and appears to be well used by people. A number of well-used but informal walking tracks run through the Site. The main track runs from the vehicle entry on Bannockburn Road to Bannockburn Inlet on the Kawarau River arm. The east part of the site encompasses the landform of Water Race hill which is accessed from the end of Terrace Street.”*
- 4.2 The Site is characteristic of an open rural landscape with clusters of exotic poplar and willow trees and dryland pasture grass. The report provides a detailed assessment of the landscape values found within the wider environment and on site (Section 4.3). I agree with the RMM assessment of landscape values and can confirm that the correct characteristics have been addressed<sup>1</sup>. I consider the following attributes describe the physical characteristics of the area well: *“The undulating topography of the terraces, escarpments, gullies, rock outcrops, and hillocks within the site and immediate context are complex and largely contain the township of Bannockburn, the Bannockburn Inlet, and the lower elevations of the Site and contributes to the character of the site and receiving environment. Historical character of some of the buildings provide a distinctive identity. The physical human-made features of the site including water*

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<sup>1</sup> In relation to best practice guidance Te Tangi a Te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

*racces, sluice faces, sludge channels and old fence lines provide a distinctive identity and speak to the heritage of Bannockburn and the site.”*

## 5.0 Zoning and Statutory Matters

- 5.1 Under the ODP the Site is identified as being within the Residential Resource Area 4 (RRA4), Map 8.
- 5.2 As outlined correctly in the RMM report, the proposal will need to consider the objectives, policies, rules and assessment matters from the following sections:
- Section 7 – Residential Resource Area
  - Section 12- District Wide Rules and Performance Standards
  - Section 16 – Subdivision
- 5.3 The District Plan is currently under review and Plan Change 19 includes a number of proposed changes to the residential zoning within the District Plan. Under Plan Change 19 the site is zoned Large Lot Residential. In the context of Plan Change 19, the following sections of the proposed District Plan have also been considered in the RMM report:
- Plan Change 19 – Large Lot Residential Zone Provisions and Subdivision provisions.
- 5.4 Given the current zoning within the CODP the Site could be developed in line with the provisions for RRA(4). It is understood the proposal requires a restricted discretionary activity consent for subdivision under ODP Rule 7.3.3(i)(c). Rule 7.3.3(i) requires the minimum allotment area is no less than 1500m<sup>2</sup>, provided that the average allotment size is no less than 2000m<sup>2</sup>. It is understood that the proposal meets this requirement. The CODC promotes an open form of development within RRA4, allowing for low density residential activity within the zone so long as any such development maintains the character of Bannockburn.
- 5.5 The site is zoned Large Lot Residential (LLRZ) under PC 19. It is understood that currently the PC19 rules do not have legal effect, but a decision from CODC is imminent.
- 5.6 A Building Line Restriction (BLR) extends through the centre of the site in a north south direction (as shown on Proposed Subdivision Landscape Plan). Landuse consent for the creation of building platforms on the affected lots triggers Rule 12.7.7(ii) and therefore is a restricted discretionary activity. Regarding a breach of the BLR, Council shall restrict the exercise of its discretion to six matters. The first two listed are most relevant to a landscape and visual assessment:
- The effect on the natural character of water bodies and their margins.
  - The effect on amenity values of the neighbourhood in particular the character of the streetscape.

## 6.0 Visual Effects Assessment

- 6.1 The RMM report provides a detailed assessment methodology, including a 7 point scale of effects from very low to very high. This is considered appropriate and in line with best practice<sup>2</sup>. I adopt the same scale in my peer review for comparability of the degree of effects.

– ‘Less than minor’ means insignificant. It can be characterised as ‘very low’ and overlapping with ‘low’ on the 7-point scale.<sup>161 162</sup>



*Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.p151*

- 6.2 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps have also been included by RMM as part of the visual assessment. It is noted that the ZTV mapping only considers landform and not vegetation cover which is standard practice. The ZTVs showed visibility of the terrain at ground level as well as to a structure at 7.5m height above ground.
- 6.3 The ZTVs provided for the viewpoints are considered useful and correct, as they appear to be prepared in line with best practice requirements. It is understood that they are prepared based on an 8m elevation model, which is considered appropriate for assessment purposes for this proposal.
- 6.4 The RMM visual effects assessment has assessed the proposal from the following eleven public viewpoints (including some viewpoints that were recommended for inclusions in the previous peer review report):
- Cromwell Heritage Precinct
  - Cairnmuir Road (two points)
  - Lake Dunstan Trail
  - Bannockburn Inlet, incl boat ramp (three points)
  - Patersons Road
  - Bannockburn Road
  - Terrace Street (two points)
- 6.5 I note that the previous application contained three visual simulations (prepared in October 2020). Since the current application did not contain visual simulations, the

<sup>2</sup> Te Tangi a Te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

previous visual simulations were utilised to draw conclusions about visibility of dwellings on lots 15-20 in the current application.

#### **6.6 Viewpoint 1 Cromwell Heritage Precinct**

- 6.6.1 I concur with the assessment that from long distance viewpoints the cluster of buildings will visually merge with the surrounding landscape context and the effects would be comparable with existing built development within the vicinity of the site.
- 6.6.2 Overall, I agree with the assessment that the degree of **visual effects is very low and neutral** from this viewpoint.

#### **6.7 Viewpoint 2 Cairnmuir Road (near Bald Hills Vineyard)**

- 6.7.1 In the RMM report it is outlined that *“From this viewpoint, future dwellings on lots 15 – 20 on the south end of the east escarpment as well as lots 13 – 14 will potentially be visible as well as partial roof lines of dwellings on lots 4 – 6 and 9 which may breach the edge of the terrace landform. However, the proposed built form will be viewed against a backdrop of foothills and mountain ranges and in the context of visible built form along Terrace Street, Hall Road, and Domain Road as well as productive land uses and rural lifestyle properties in the foreground.”*
- 6.7.2 I agree that the degree of **visual effects from this viewpoint would be very low and adverse**, with proposed buildings on Lots 15-20 only just detectable due to the viewing distance.

#### **6.8 Viewpoint 3 Cairnmuir Road (near Carrick Winery & Vineyards)**

- 6.8.1 In the RMM report it is outlined that *“From this viewpoint location, there will be clear views of dwellings on lots 15 – 20 on the south end of the escarpment, due to the elevated position of these lots. Dwellings on lots 12 – 14 will also be visible and the dwelling on lot 9 will be partly visible through the gully due to the angle of the view. Roof lines from dwellings on lots 2 – 5 and 9 – 11 are likely to protrude above the edge of the terrace landform though will be largely screened by street trees and the mitigation planting once established.”*
- 6.8.2 I agree 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. I note that the mitigation planting on Lot 30 will assist in further reducing the visual effects, but given the proposed 3m spacing of planting this is likely to take at least ten years.

#### **6.9 Viewpoint 4 Lake Dunstan Trail near Carrick Winery**

- 6.9.1 I concur with the RMM report that *“from this viewpoint location, future dwellings on lots 12 – 14, and 15 – 20 will be visible. Roof lines from lots 4, 5, 10 and 11 may also be visible, protruding above the edge of the terrace landform though will be largely screened by street trees and the mitigation planting once established. The future dwelling on lot 9 may be partly visible through the gully.”*
- 6.9.2 I agree 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 the proposed mitigation planting.

#### **6.10 Viewpoint 5 Bannockburn Boat Ramp**

- 6.10.1 The RMM report assesses the visual effects of the proposal from this viewpoint as follows: *“From this viewpoint, lots 15 – 20 will be visible at the south end of the east facing escarpment due to the elevated position of these lots. Buildings situated within these lots will not break the skyline but will be readily noticed by an observer, forming a visible and recognisable element within the overall scene. The proposed design controls including height controls, material and colour selection, and the proposed plant palette will aid in visually settling future dwellings into the existing landscape. In addition, dwellings within lots 5, 10 – 14 may also be potentially visible as the roofline of these dwellings may breach the edge of the terrace landform.”*
- 6.10.2 Overall, I agree with the assessment that the **degree of visual effects is low-moderate and adverse** from this viewpoint with several dwellings appearing along the ridgeline of the escarpment, but as a small component of the view. I consider that an increased planting density within Lot 30 would achieve a reduction of visibility of buildings on Lots 10-14.

#### **6.11 Viewpoint 6 Kawarau Bannockburn Inlet (South of Recreation Reserve)**

- 6.11.1 Currently no existing buildings are visible from this viewpoint which is located around 200m from the proposed Site. I concur with the RMM report that *“from this location, the dwellings on lots 5 and 15 – 20 on south end of the escarpment will be visible, although setback from the Inlet. It is anticipated that future dwellings located on these lots will potentially break the skyline when viewed from this location. They will also form a new element in the scene, being the only dwellings visible from this location. Street trees and mitigation planting will also be visible and will partly screen the dwelling on lot 5 while also forming a backdrop to built form on lots 15-20. Earthworks within lots 100 and 101 for the road and the walking track will also be somewhat visible in the short term.”*
- 6.11.2 Overall, I agree with the 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, in particular due to the breach of the skyline and the relatively short viewing distance. However, deletion of dwellings on Lot 30 reduced the level of effect from the previous application.

#### **6.12 Viewpoint 7 Bannockburn Inlet Recreation Reserve**

- 6.12.1 The RMM report highlights that there are no existing dwellings visible from this viewpoint. *“Due to proximity and the nature of the topography there are only limited views of the subject site from the Bannockburn Recreation Reserve. From this location, only the dwellings on the end lots on the escarpment (lots 15 – 20) will potentially be visible, however they are set back from the Inlet, and it is anticipated that they will be partly screened by the existing landform and vegetation in the foreground. In addition, proposed mitigation through design controls will help to reduce the visual prominence of these dwellings. Even so, it is expected that future dwellings located on these lots will be partially visible and will potentially break the skyline when viewed from this location. They will also form a new element in the scene, being the only dwellings visible from this location. Mitigation planting and*

*street trees will be somewhat visible and will form a partial backdrop to the built form on lots 15 – 20.”*

- 6.12.2 Overall, I consider that the **degree of visual effects is up to moderate and adverse** from this viewpoint, depending on the exact viewing location. It is likely that the buildings on Lots 15-20 will break the skyline in some views, but the viewing distance is greater than from VP6 and the viewing angle more oblique. I consider visibility from this viewpoint and the previous one (VP 6) to lead to the highest visual effects. However, deletion of dwellings on Lot 30 reduced the level of effect from the previous application.

### **6.13 Viewpoint 8 Patersons Road**

- 6.13.1 The RMM report states that *“from this viewpoint location, there will be clear views of lots 15 – 20 on the south end of the escarpment, due to the elevated position of these lots. Roof lines from lots 2 – 6 and 9 – 14 may also be somewhat visible as they are likely to protrude above the edge of the terrace landform. Proposed mitigation planting and street trees will, in time, largely screen the built form within lots 2 – 6 and 9 – 14.”*

- 6.13.2 Overall, I agree with the assessment that *“in the context of the existing visible development, the proposed design controls, and mitigation planting, it is likely that the proposal will not contrast significantly with the existing scene and will appear as an extension to existing visible built form.”* In my view, the **degree of visual effects will be no more than moderate-low and adverse** from this viewpoint, based on the assumption that the RMM recommendations, in particular proposed planting, would be implemented as part of the application. The proposed planting and muted colours for buildings will assist with integrating the proposal visually.

### **6.14 Viewpoint 9 Bannockburn Road**

- 6.14.1 Views from this direction are oriented towards the eastern part of the development and it is agreed that *“from this viewpoint, future dwellings on lot 1, 7-13 will be potentially visible, rooflines of dwellings on lots 2 – 6 may also be partially visible. While there is limited visibility of the lots within the BLR (4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, and 15 to 20), in any case where seen they will be viewed across/beyond permitted development anticipated to be built in the eastern part of the site adjacent to Bannockburn Road.”*

- 6.14.2 Overall, I agree with the assessment that the **degree of visual effects is low-moderate and adverse** from this viewpoint while no residential development is implemented in the foreground of the view. This will reduce to low if buildings are visible in the foreground.

### **6.15 Viewpoints 10 and 11 Terrace Street**

- 6.15.1 Two viewpoints were chosen on Terrace Street, one adjacent to the Site and one closer to Bannockburn Road. The visual effects in proximity to the Site will be substantially higher than from the more distant viewpoints along Terrace Street where existing dwellings mostly obscure the views to the proposal. However, the RMM report correctly states that *“from this viewpoint, it is anticipated that built form on lots 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 10 may be partly visible.”* and *“Lots 1, 4, and 5<sup>3</sup> will be visible on the right side of the scene along the main road. These dwellings are, for*

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<sup>3</sup> I note that the building platform on Lot 5 falls mostly within the BLR.

*the most part, not in breach of the BLR so could be reasonably anticipated based on the underlying zoning.”*

- 6.15.2 I consider that the **degree of visual effects of buildings in the BLR area ranges from very low to low-moderate** depending on the viewpoint. While barely detectable from a distance, the degree of change from a rural outlook to a residential street scene would be moderate to high on the site itself and for immediately adjacent viewpoints. However, some residential development is expected within the Residential Resource Area 4 and buildings that fall within the BLR would appear in the backdrop. Whether the effects are perceived as positive or adverse would likely depend on the viewer. The loss of openness on the outlook to the wider panoramic landscape would likely be considered as adverse, while the change from an unkempt paddock to a more formalised, planted street scene may be regarded as beneficial by some viewers.

### **6.16 Conclusion Visual Effects Assessment**

- 6.17 I visited the viewpoints outlined above and checked the visibility and potential visual effects described in the report in the context of the surrounding landscape modifications. Based on the site visits in 2021 and 2024, the above viewpoints outlined on the RMM plans (Graphic Attachment: Viewpoint Locations Map, sheet 12) are considered appropriate in location to enable an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects from these identified areas. While no up-to-date visual simulations were provided with this current application, the visual simulations provided in 2020 have been helpful to understand the visual effects for lots 15-20 from Bannockburn Inlet.
- 6.18 The RMM report states that *“the effects of the proposal on the existing visual amenity will extend beyond the site but are relatively contained. The more distant views (Viewpoints 1 & 2) will be viewed against a vast and complex landscape, making the proposed development difficult to discern and result in adverse effects from negligible to very low. 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, adverse effects from viewpoints in this area range from low-moderate to moderate. Views from Bannockburn township to the west of the site (Viewpoints 9-11), while also impacted, portray a different character given the existence of residential built form in the context, resulting in effects from negligible to low-moderate. As a result, I consider that the effects on visual amenity overall are low-moderate and consider this degree of effects to be appropriate in the context.”*
- 6.19 I agree with this 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.
- 6.20 The assessment provided with this application has addressed all relevant viewpoints, apart from effects on private residences within the Bannockburn settlement in vicinity of the site, such as those along and off to the south of Terrace Street and on the spur above the site, have not been considered in the assessment (potentially affected dwellings shown in Figure 1 below).



*Figure 1 Photo showing private residences looking out towards the Site above and along Terrace Street and on the elevated spur that have not been specifically considered in the visual effect assessment.*

- 6.21 A night time assessment was provided with the visual effects assessment and it is understood that *“an extension of street lighting down Terrace Street is proposed to continue in a similar manner until reaching the Building Line Restriction. Where beyond the BLR, it is proposed that bollard style lighting is implemented to minimise the impact on local residents and those viewing the area from outside the development at night time.”* I consider that bollard down-lighting that is no higher than 1m above ground would adequately address light-spill in this environment adjacent to existing development.
- 6.22 Overall, I consider that the current proposal has addressed many of the visual effects concerns raised in relation to the previous application. The removal of buildings on Lot 30, where previously 6 lots were located along the edge of the terrace in a visually prominent location, has substantially reduced the visual effects when viewed from the east, in particular from the Bannockburn Inlet. 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.

## **7.0 Assessment Against Central Otago District Plan**

- 7.1 In my view, the combination of the RRA (4) zoning requirements need to be considered together with the BLR requirements. This means that the effects on amenity and character for both the Bannockburn settlement and the rural area to the east need to be considered. This has implications in the context of the settlement pattern along Terrace Street and around Revell's Basin, as well as the visual and landscape effects of dwellings along the escarpment above Shepherd's Creek. It is noted that no building platforms are proposed on Lots 30 and 40 immediately above the Bannockburn Inlet.



- 7.2 The district plan shows a Building Line Restriction (BLR) that applies to a portion of the subject site. The BLR controls new buildings, relocated buildings, and/or extended or substantially rebuilt buildings within the area subject to the restriction. Land use consent as a restricted discretionary activity is required for any lot where the buildable area is affected by the BLR and triggers Rule 12.7.7 (ii) of the CODP.
- 7.3 In my view, the following potential effects of buildings within the BLR need to be considered in light of the following two district plan matters:
- **Visual effects** of buildings enabled under the proposal on the surrounding area, including viewpoints to the east around the Bannockburn Inlet and from residential areas within Bannockburn to the south/ south-west. This includes effects of location of buildings within the area identified through the BLR to the east of the highpoints of Water Race Hill Terrace.
  - **Landscape effects** of development extending on the slopes of the Water Race Hill Terrace slopes, including landscape character change to the adjacent rural environment and experience of recreational users.

#### **Visual effects**

- 7.4 As outlined above in the Visual Effects Assessment, the RMM assessment report considers the visual effects from six of the selected viewpoints (VP3-8) to be **low-moderate (minor) or moderate (more than minor)**, with Viewpoints 6 and 7 (Bannockburn Recreation Reserve) experiencing the worst visual effects (Moderate). 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).
- 7.5 The RMM report finds that *“given the recent history of development in Bannockburn which has seen dwellings built along the south eastern side of Terrace St resulting in built form visible on the ridgeline, it is reasonable to conclude that landscape change arising from the proposed development within the BLR is not a ‘new’ proposition in terms of visibility of built form in this part of Bannockburn. Therefore, while there is no development approved in the BLR, dwellings already present within the immediate setting suggests that there is potential for the landscape to absorb some development beyond the BLR within this location.”*
- 7.6 I agree 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.
- 7.7 However, I agree that reduction in the number of lots proposed within the BLR in this application has reduced the visual effects along the visually most sensitive part of the landform contained within Lot 30. While, viewpoints in the Bannockburn Recreation Reserve would experience more than minor visual effects, the majority of visual effects from other viewpoints would be minor or less than minor.

#### **Landscape and Natural Character Effects**

- 7.8 As outlined under the visual effects the most relevant views are the public and private views around Bannockburn Inlet. Parts of Bannockburn are visible on the terrace that

it is located on in some of these views. Currently, however, views to the settlement from the east are limited with buildings confined to the flat part of the terrace. While I consider that the introduction of six buildings that will spill over the edge of the terrace above Shepherds Creek, the landscape effects on the rural environment will be lower than under the previous application that contained buildings along the Bannockburn Inlet escarpment (now Lot 30). In my opinion, the location of buildings on the edge and upper slope of the escarpment on lots 15-20 will lead to low-moderate adverse effects on the landscape character and visual amenity within the Bannockburn Inlet area, including the terraces where private residences are located. This will appear as urban sprawl from the existing Bannockburn settlement which is otherwise confined to the flat, elevated terrace.

- 7.9 It is also noted that the BLR requires the applicant to address “the effect on the natural character of water bodies and their margins”, which includes the Kowarau River within the Bannockburn Inlet. The visual dominance of buildings on the skyline above Shepherds Creek would in my view increase the visual presence of man-made structures in the immediate context of the waterbody and decrease the perceived natural character currently experienced by recreationist in the area. I agree with the RMM report where it concludes that *“the revised proposal includes a reduced lot configuration of 20 residential lots, designated building platform, building height restrictions, mitigation planting and design guidelines to minimise potential adverse effects on the open and natural character of the surrounding landscape and water bodies. While the natural and open character of the site itself will be reduced, the proposed development is in keeping with existing surrounding development and has been sensitively designed to minimise potential adverse effects on the open and natural character of the receiving environment.”* I agree that the adverse effects on the natural character of the Inlet are acceptable if the proposed mitigation measures are implemented.
- 7.10 The RMM assessment considers that *“a significant positive outcome from the proposal is the allocation of Lot 30 as a vested public reserve and Lot 40 as a balance lot to be retained for rural activities or ecological enhancement. This is also to provide opportunities for recreation and, paired with Lots 50 and 51 (balance lots) will ensure long term connectivity to Bannockburn Inlet for all Bannockburn residents.* I agree that the proposal has recreation benefits and I consider that the formalisation of the walkway connections through the balance lots (Lot 51, 30 and 40 a positive effect of the proposal.

### ***Effects on the Residential Amenity of Bannockburn***

- 7.11 The proposed residential lot sizes comply with the minimum size as set out in the provisions for RRA (4) and are also generally consistent with lot sizes on Terrace Street and within the centre of Bannockburn.
- 7.12 In relation to Residential Resource Area (4) under Policy 7.2.7 the RMM report outlines that *“while the proposal constitutes an extension of the semi-urban form of Bannockburn, this change can be anticipated based on the ODP and the proposal seeks to maintain the specific characteristics of Bannockburn and the wider receiving environment through adherence to the RRA (4) minimum lot size and design controls to ensure built form is in keeping with the local vernacular, as well as protection of open space and recreation amenity through the designation of a public reserve and maintenance of an open and rural outlook from Bannockburn Road. Given the current zoning within the CODP, it is accepted that the landscape of the subject site has the capacity to be developed in line with the provisions for RRA (4). The proposed lot*

*sizes comply with the minimum size as set out in the provisions for RRA (4) and are also consistent with existing development adjacent to the site on Terrace Street.”*

- 7.13 While most of the proposed lots would not meet the minimum lot size of 2000m<sup>2</sup> permitted under the Large Lot Residential Zoning under PC 19, I agree with the RMM assessment that the proposed subdivision is generally in character with existing residential development within Bannockburn and the built form along Terrace Street. Given the relatively central location within Bannockburn, I consider the proposed lot size to be appropriate in light of the proposed open space provided within the development. The proposal would, in my view, result in a density *“providing for detached dwellings on large sites and maintaining a high open space to built form ratio”*.

## 8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 The RMM landscape and visual assessment report is comprehensive and has addressed the key concerns raised in relation to the previous application (RC190154, review by BML in 2021). All relevant viewpoints were assessed in this current assessment report and I generally agree with the findings regarding the level of effect.
- 8.2 The RMM report highlights the following: *“The sensitivity of the elevated and exposed topography (escarpment) of the area of the site within the BLR overlay has required careful design of the subdivision proposal. For this area of the subject site, the current proposal includes a reduced number of lots as compared to the previous application. In the proposed 20 lot layout those lots that are located within the BLR are generally viewed in the context of other existing built form.”* I consider this a substantial improvement in comparison to the previous application.
- 8.3 I agree 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.
- 8.4 However, I agree that the reduction in the number of lots proposed within the BLR in this application has reduced the visual effects along the visually most sensitive part of the landform contained within Lot 30. While, viewpoints in the Bannockburn Recreation Reserve would experience more than minor visual effects, the majority of visual effects from other viewpoints would be minor or less than minor.
- 8.5 I consider that the BLR also serves the purpose of ensuring that the amenity value of the landscape to the east and the natural character values of the Kawarau River can be maintained. While Lots 15-20 would be visible along the terrace edge from elevated viewpoints, they are set back from the Kawarau Inlet along Shepherd’s Creek. I, therefore, consider their visual prominence to be of a lesser concern than buildings within Lot 30 were under the previous application. 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.

- 8.6 I agree that the proposal has recreation benefits and I consider that the formalisation of the walkway connections through the balance lots (Lot 51, 30 and 40) a positive effect of the proposal.
- 8.7 I support all the recommended design controls including building platforms, height limits, planting mitigation and rules regarding materials and colour will ensure that the proposed built form within the BLR can be absorbed and effects largely mitigated when viewed in the context of adjacent development. In relation to the proposed mitigation planting on Lot 30, I support the species selection, but note that the planting specifications are proposed as follows:
- *Plants will be supplied at PB3 size or larger, and planted at a spacing of 3m centres to achieve sufficient coverage.*
- 8.8 In my view, the planting at a spacing of 3m centres will require at least 10 years to provide a dense enough stand of plants to provide effective mitigation. I recommend that the Proposed Mitigation Planting should be undertaken at 1.5m spacing in the areas identified on RMM Proposed Subdivision Landscape Plan (Sheet 11). I recommend implementation of the other proposed conditions relating to planting outlined under section 2.2 of the RMM report, including fertiliser, plant guards and irrigation.
- 8.9 The RMM assessment states under 7.2.3 Policy – Environmental Quality that *“the proposal will have positive outcomes for the environmental quality of the site through the designation of a public reserve and the balance lots which will maintain the openness and naturalness of this area and provision for walking tracks for the enjoyment of the wider community. Further, there is potential for weed control, pest management and native revegetation which would improve the ecological quality of the subject site and the vested reserve.”* It is unclear if these ecological improvements are proposed to be undertaken by the applicant.
- 8.10 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. 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.
- 8.11 I also support the other volunteered conditions, including the colour restrictions, identification of buildings platforms and proposed built coverage of 300m<sup>2</sup> on all lots.