

6 Landscape

6.1 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to recognise the landscape as a significant resource to the district and region. This resource requires protection from inappropriate activities that could degrade its qualities, character and values.

Landscapes have been categorised to provide certainty of their importance to the District, to align with regional and national legislation and to provide decision makers with a basis to consider the appropriateness of activities when having regard to the RMA. In particular, outstanding natural features and landscapes as matters of national importance.

6.2 Values

The District's landscapes are of significant value to the people who live in, work in or visit the District. The District relies in a large part for its social and economic wellbeing on the quality of the landscape, open spaces and environmental image.

The landscapes consist of a variety of landforms created by uplift and glaciations, which include mountains, ice-sculpted rock, scree slopes, moraine, fans, a variety of confined and braided river systems, valley floors and lake basins. These distinct landforms remain easily legible and strong features of the present landscape.

Indigenous vegetation also contributes to the quality of the District's landscapes. Whilst much of the original vegetation has been modified, the colour and texture of indigenous vegetation within these landforms contribute to the distinctive identity of the District's landscapes.

The open character of productive farmland is a key element of the landscape character which can be vulnerable to degradation from subdivision, development and non-farming activities. The prevalence of large farms and landholdings contributes to the open space and rural working character of the landscape. The predominance of open space over housing and related domestic elements is a strong determinant of the character of the District's rural landscapes.

Some rural areas, particularly those closer to Queenstown and Wanaka town centres and within parts of the Wakatipu Basin, have an established pattern of housing on smaller landholdings. The landscape character of these areas has been modified by vehicle accesses, earthworks and vegetation planting for amenity, screening and shelter, which have reduced the open character exhibited by larger scale farming activities.

While acknowledging these rural areas have established housing, a substantial amount of subdivision and development has been approved in these areas and the landscape values of these areas are vulnerable to degradation from further subdivision and development. It is realised that rural lifestyle development has a finite capacity if the District's distinctive rural landscape values are to be sustained.

The lakes and rivers both on their own and, when viewed as part of the distinctive landscape are a significant element of the national and international identity of the District and provide for a wide range of amenity and recreational opportunities. They are nationally and internationally recognised as part of the reason for the District's importance as a visitor destination, as well as one of the reasons for residents to belong to the area. Managing the landscape and recreational values on the surface of lakes and rivers is an important District Plan function.

Landscapes have been categorised into three classifications within the Rural Zone. These are Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONL) and Outstanding Natural Features (ONF), where their use, development and protection are a matter of national importance under Section 6 of the RMA. The Rural Landscapes Classification (RLC) makes up the remaining Rural Zoned land and has varying types of landscape character and amenity values. Specific policy and assessment matters are provided to manage the potential effects of subdivision and development in these locations.

6.3 Objectives and Policies

6.3.1 Objective - The District contains and values Outstanding Natural Features, Outstanding Natural Landscapes, and Rural Landscapes that require protection from inappropriate subdivision and development.

Policies

6.3.1.1 Identify the District's Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features on the Planning Maps.

6.3.1.2 Classify the Rural Zoned landscapes in the District as:

- Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF)
- Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL)
- Rural Landscape Classification (RLC)

6.3.1.3 That subdivision and development proposals located within the Outstanding Natural Landscape, or an Outstanding Natural Feature, be assessed against the assessment matters in provisions 21.7.1 and 21.7.3 because subdivision and development is inappropriate in almost all locations, meaning successful applications will be exceptional cases.

6.3.1.4 That subdivision and development proposals located within the Rural Landscape be assessed against the assessment matters in provisions 21.7.2 and 21.7.3 because subdivision and development is inappropriate in many locations in these landscapes, meaning successful applications will be, on balance, consistent with the assessment matters.

6.3.1.5 Avoid urban subdivision and development in the Rural Zones.

6.3.1.6 Enable rural lifestyle living through applying Rural Lifestyle Zone and Rural Residential Zone plan changes in areas where the landscape can accommodate change.

6.3.1.7 When locating urban growth boundaries or extending urban settlements through plan changes, avoid impinging on Outstanding Natural Landscapes or Outstanding Natural Features and minimise disruption to the values derived from open rural landscapes.

6.3.1.8 Ensure that the location and direction of lights does not cause glare to other properties, roads, and public places or the night sky.

6.3.1.9 Ensure the District's distinctive landscapes are not degraded by forestry and timber harvesting activities.

6.3.1.10 Recognise that low-intensity pastoral farming on large landholdings contributes to the District's landscape character.

6.3.1.11 Recognise the importance of protecting the landscape character and visual amenity values, particularly as viewed from public places.

6.3.1.12 Recognise and provide for the protection of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes with particular regard to values relating to cultural and historic elements, geological features and matters of cultural and spiritual value to Tangata Whenua, including Tōpuni.

6.3.2 Objective - Avoid adverse cumulative effects on landscape character and amenity values caused by incremental subdivision and development.

Policies

- 6.3.2.1 Acknowledge that subdivision and development in the rural zones, specifically residential development has a finite capacity if the District's landscape quality, character and amenity values are to be sustained.
- 6.3.2.2 Allow residential subdivision and development only in locations where the District's landscape character and visual amenity would not be degraded.
- 6.3.2.3 Recognise that proposals for residential subdivision or development in the Rural Zone that seek support from existing and consented subdivision or development have potential for adverse cumulative effects. Particularly where the subdivision and development would constitute sprawl along roads.
- 6.3.2.4 Have particular regard to the potential adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity values from infill within areas with existing rural lifestyle development or where further subdivision and development would constitute sprawl along roads.
- 6.3.2.5 Ensure incremental changes from subdivision and development do not degrade landscape quality, character or openness as a result of activities associated with mitigation of the visual effects of proposed development such as screening planting, mounding and earthworks.
- 6.3.3 Objective - Protect, maintain or enhance the district's Outstanding Natural Features (ONF).**

Policies

- 6.3.3.1 Avoid subdivision and development on Outstanding Natural Features that does not protect, maintain or enhance Outstanding Natural Features.
- 6.3.3.2 Ensure that subdivision and development in the Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Rural Landscapes adjacent to Outstanding Natural Features would not degrade the landscape character and visual amenity of Outstanding Natural Features.
- 6.3.4 Objective - Protect, maintain or enhance the District's Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONL).**

Policies

- 6.3.4.1 Avoid subdivision and development that would degrade the important qualities of the landscape character, particularly where there is no or little capacity to absorb change.
- 6.3.4.2 Recognise that large parts of the District's Outstanding Natural Landscapes include working farms and accept that viable farming involves activities which may modify the landscape, providing the quality and character of the Outstanding Natural Landscape is not adversely affected.
- 6.3.4.3 Have regard to adverse effects on landscape character, and visual amenity values as viewed from public places, with emphasis on formed roads.
- 6.3.4.4 The landscape character and amenity values of the Outstanding Natural Landscape are a significant intrinsic, economic and recreational resource, such that large scale renewable electricity generation or new large scale mineral extraction development proposals including windfarm or hydro energy generation are not likely to be compatible with the Outstanding Natural Landscapes of the District.
- 6.3.5 Objective - Ensure subdivision and development does not degrade landscape character and diminish visual amenity values of the Rural Landscapes (RLC).**

Policies

- 6.3.5.1 Allow adverse effects from subdivision and development that are:

- Highly visible from public places and other places which are frequented by members of the public generally (except any trail as defined in this Plan); and
- Visible from public roads.

6.3.5.2 Avoid planting and screening, particularly along roads and boundaries, which would degrade openness where such openness is an important part of the landscape character.

6.3.5.3 Encourage any landscaping to be sustainable and consistent with the established character of the area.

6.3.5.4 Encourage development to utilise shared accesses and infrastructure, to locate within the parts of the site where they will be least visible, and have the least disruption to the landform and rural character.

6.3.5.5 Have regard to the adverse effects from subdivision and development on the open landscape character where it is open at present.

6.3.6 Objective - Protect, maintain or enhance the landscape quality, character and visual amenity provided by the lakes and rivers and their margins from the effects of structures and activities.

Policies

6.3.6.1 Control the location, intensity and scale of buildings, jetties, moorings and utility structures on the surface and margins of water bodies and ensure these structures maintain or enhance the landscape character and amenity values.

6.3.6.2 Recognise the character of the Frankton Arm including the established jetties and provide for these on the basis that the visual qualities of the District's distinctive landscapes are maintained and enhanced.

6.3.6.3 Recognise the urban character of Queenstown Bay and provide for structures and facilities providing they protect, maintain or enhance the appreciation of the District's distinct landscapes.

6.3.7 Objective - Recognise and protect indigenous biodiversity where it contributes to the visual quality and distinctiveness of the District's landscapes.

Policies

6.3.7.1 Encourage subdivision and development proposals to promote indigenous biodiversity protection and regeneration where the landscape and nature conservation values would be maintained or enhanced, particularly where the subdivision or development constitutes a change in the intensity in the land use or the retirement of productive farm land.

6.3.7.2 Avoid indigenous vegetation clearance where it would significantly degrade the visual character and qualities of the District's distinctive landscapes.

6.3.8 Objective - Recognise the dependence of tourism on the District's landscapes.

Policies

6.3.8.1 Acknowledge the contribution tourism infrastructure makes to the economic and recreational values of the District.

6.3.8.2 Recognise that commercial recreation and tourism related activities locating within the rural zones may be appropriate where these activities enhance the appreciation of landscapes, and on the basis they would protect, maintain or enhance landscape quality, character and visual amenity values.

- 6.3.8.3 Exclude identified Ski Area Sub Zones from the landscape categories and full assessment of the landscape provisions while controlling the impact of the ski field structures and activities on the wider environment.
- 6.3.8.4 Provide a separate regulatory regime for the Gibbston Valley, identified as the Gibbston Character Zone, in recognition of its contribution to tourism and viticulture while controlling the impact of buildings, earthworks and non-viticulture related activities on the wider environment.

6.4 Rules

6.4.1 Applications of the landscape provisions

- 6.4.1.1 The term “subdivision and development) includes subdivision, identification of building platforms, any buildings and associated activities such as roading, earthworks, lighting, landscaping, planting and boundary fencing and access / gateway structures.
- 6.4.1.2 The landscape categories apply only to the Rural Zone. The Landscape Chapter and Strategic Chapter’s objectives and policies are relevant and applicable in all zones where landscape values are at issue.
- 6.4.1.3 The landscape categories do not apply to the following within the Rural Zones:
- a. Ski Area Activities within the Ski Area Sub Zones.
 - b. The area of the Frankton Arm located to the east of the Outstanding Natural Landscape line as shown on the District Plan maps.
 - c. The Gibbston Character Zone.
 - d. The Rural Lifestyle Zone.
 - e. The Rural Residential Zone.
- 6.4.1.4 The landscape categories apply to lakes and rivers. Except where otherwise stated or shown on the Planning Maps, lakes and rivers are categorised as outstanding natural landscapes.
- 6.4.1.5 Where a utility is to be located within the Rural Zone and requires resource consent as a discretionary activity, the objectives and policies of the landscape chapter are applicable.