

Mackenzie District Council
PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE 13
HEARING STATEMENT BY GRAHAM DENSEM, LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECT,
ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL

1. This statement presents in note form a review of issues raised & a view on the way forward from here.

Brief from Council

2. My analysis not limited by Council brief or Councillors
3. Council's concern was *'unforeseen numbers of applications for subdivision and housing in rural parts of the Basin ...and tenure review applications that potentially could change the balance established under the existing Plan mechanisms'* (Landscape Study, 1.11).
4. Tried to assist the Council by remaining conscious of costs.
5. Basic analysis not fully developed i) because initial visits to station owners indicated node proposals generally in line with residents' opinion; ii) I also understood a second round of consultations would occur to confirm specific node locations and boundaries for each property.
6. Developed study may not differ greatly in outcomes but will be necessary to complete this plan change.
7. Council has lost support of landowners through specific measures of PC13, but I remain convinced as to the basic tenets of the Landscape Study analysis.

Landscape Character

8. Critique that existing nodal character of Basin was not demonstrated, not that it didn't exist.
9. I am satisfied it does, but obviously will have to prove it, as the basis for the Council's approach.

Natural

10. RMA processes over-emphasise 'natural' because trying to fit in with wording of s.6(a) or (b) of RMA. Is Hagley Park 'outstanding'?
11. Natural values were assessed as 'moderate' or 'high' in 36 of 42 units of Basin and 'low' in 6.
12. Banks Peninsular Decision accepted 'outstanding' designation on modified, working farm lands. Is precedent for outstanding values on land somewhat 'down the natural scale'.
13. Basin almost totally a modified and managed landscape, yet in my view, retains outstanding values. For example in wilding areas, hydro modifications, lakes.

14. 'Outstanding Working Landscape' (OWL) indicated high value, modified landscape requiring interventions for maintenance. Thought untenable under RMA scrutiny.
15. I have not stated 'Outstanding Natural Landscape' because feel strongly that values come from a wider range of attributes than solely 'natural'.
16. Need to reinstate some form of OWL in Plan.

Development

17. Distinguish between residential, commercial and farm development because of their differing potential effects on landscape values.
18. Managing residential and commercial development should be central tenet of PC13, not managing farm development.
19. PC13 should establish a regime whereby housing development is generally expected within nodes, and is non-notified. Only a few wont succeed; development generally not expected outside nodes, would full application, and only few expected to succeed.
20. Farm development: for traditional and 'benign' buildings and land surface, Council maintain little intervention.
21. Commercial developments, eg tourist lodge, constitute a new use with potential to influence landscape values. Should be subject to consent processes.

My Outstanding Evaluation

22. Remain of the opinion that almost all the Basin comprises outstanding landscape
23. Mine differs from Regional Study in including fore- and eastern ranges (Ben Ohau, Gammack, Dalgety) in outstanding (Map 6).
24. My assessment at sub-district (i.e. Basin-wide) level but with attention to the place of this landscape within NZ as a whole. Was an Eastern Mackenzie Study.
25. In comparison to NZ landscape generally, the Basin stands out in several ways.
26. A basic assessment study was undertaken but not presented, applying 4 of 'modified Pigeon Bay' criteria to 42 units based on 'Character Areas' (Map 4).
27. My opinion that 'legible' and 'transient' factors of prime importance to Basin landscape, not spurious. Combining these into 'aesthetic' (Dr Steven) would not change the outcome.
28. Not all Basin outstanding – Manuka Terrace, Ruataniwha, Twizel & Tekapo townships excluded.
29. Main issue would be cut-off point between outstanding and amenity landscapes. My conclusion is interconnected nature of Basin units, therefore conservative in

establishing cut-off. Alternative 'amenity' landscapes also be worthy of proposed controls.

30. My conviction remains that sub-areas of Basin are consistently of outstanding value and 'stand out' from New Zealand generally, and that '\$200,000 study' maybe little different in conclusions, but might stand up better to Environment Court.
31. Study should be formalised and made transparent for PC13 progress.

Alternatives to Nodal Approach?

32. The nodal approach attempts to manage the distribution of housing developments throughout the Basin by making developments more certain within identified nodes, with high levels of naturalness maintained between.
33. My conclusion was that dispersed or random development such as a '4 ha' approach had greater potential to diminish the high levels of naturalness and the (disputed) existing pattern of development.
34. A discretionary regime has been suggested, such as in Queenstown. It undoubtedly would be better than the existing rural regime, but my impression is that this may have less certainty than a (properly identified) node system and may stretch the resources of the Mackenzie District.
35. My preference is to achieve certainty by doing what it takes to establish the nodal system with certainty and satisfy the landowners under PC13.

Single Houses?

36. No landscape reason for minimum number houses in node, but is for maximum number.
37. A 'node' could comprise a single isolated house without marked impacts, so long as it complied with the node criteria, including separation between nodes. This could include houses for retiring land owners.
38. Council needs to ensure 'singles' are wedded to nodal policies to avoid de facto 4ha spread of single isolated dwellings and roads, to the extent of extinguishing 'empty' character between (geographical character).

Maximum Size

39. Aim is to avoid new townships under the nodal guise.
40. Larger developments should undergo the regular Council processes.

Pink Areas (Map 8)

41. Intended as 'empowering' device, indicating where was more certainty of achieving a housing development.
42. Within any general pink area, still need to select suitable sites at micro-scale.
43. Based on landscape capacity not social quotas.

- 44. Agreed it creates potential for competition/comparison between neighbours.
- 45. In agreed nodes, housing developments would be non-notified where meet the planning criteria.
- 46. 'White areas' where less capacity for satisfactorily siting a node – eg in middle of east basin (very open & expansive, least impacts if developments are around edges, at landscape change)
- 47. My preference now would be carry out a second round of property meetings, receive owners proposals as to where they would envisage node sites on their land, and where possible, agree location and number of nodes for each property. These would then be incorporated in Plan and Planning Maps and would abolish 'pink' areas in those cases. Associated statement of node location, boundaries, service and access route, plus small plan.

Relationship between Map 7 (Capacity to Absorb Development) & Map 8 (Capacity for New Nodes)

- 48. Map 7 is an analytical summary of, in my opinion, the relative capacity of areas to absorb development without altering the landscape. Map 8 is a proposal of areas where nodes are appropriate (pink) or not (white) and the number of nodes I can be sure would maintain the landscape quality in its present state.
- 49. 'Landscape quality' refers to geographic quality, that is, density and spatial disposition, not solely visual quality.

Existing Homestead Areas

- 50. In my view, these are essential for farm operations. In many cases the physical areas are quite large.
- 51. No landscape reason to not include whole existing area in node. Capacity to absorb development quite good.
- 52. Should be liberal rules for farm operations and developments within this area, except overly-large buildings.

Ngai Tahu

- 53. PC13 appears generally in keeping, but this submission adds focus to the values of some areas.
- 54. Should introduce specific reference to Ngai Tahu in PC13, and consult over proposed changes before committal.
- 55. May be appropriate to re-introduce Lakeside Protection Areas, based on Ngai Tahu statement, possibly with some revised boundaries.
- 56. Would change the balance of this and other submissions if Council deletes the nodal approach

Objective 3A

57. If possible, remove 'natural' from objective and consequent policies (e.g.3D)

Policy 3A

58. Accept amended wording.

Policy 3E

59. Not in favour of deletion

Policy 3J

60. Retain policy on remote farm buildings, remove reference to 'controls', but include reference to 'expected to conform to'. Also include reference to maximum size?

Graham Densem
12 September 2008