

**BEFORE COMMISSIONER PANEL APPOINTED BY  
MACKENZIE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**In the matter** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**And**

**In the matter** of an application by Godley Peaks Station Limited to establish Homestead and Accessory Buildings at Godley Peaks Station, Lake Tekapo.

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**EVIDENCE OF PATRICK JOHN BAXTER ON BEHALF OF GODLEY  
PEAKS STATION (LANDSCAPE AND VISUALS)**

**16 March 2026**

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## **MAY IT PLEASE THE PANEL:**

### **Credential and Experience**

- 1 My full name is Patrick John Baxter. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Geography from 1981 (Canterbury University) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture (Lincoln University) from 1984. I am a Director of Baxter Design Group Limited, a Queenstown based consultancy specialising in landscape architecture, urban design, masterplanning and landscape planning and I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.
- 2 I was employed in the Queenstown office of Boffa Miskell from 1989 until 1998. In 1998, I established my own practice specialising in landscape architecture, urban design and masterplanning. Baxter Design currently employs 7 staff and is working on projects throughout New Zealand and the South Pacific, including other current projects in the Mackenzie Basin.
- 3 I am very familiar with the site and its environs relevant to this hearing, and also spent a considerable portion of my childhood in the area (Tekapo). During the course of my professional career, I have worked on many projects within the Mackenzie Basin including development projects, incorporating both design and landscape assessment work.

### **Environment Court Practice Note**

- 4 While this is not an Environment Court Hearing, I have complied with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Consolidated Practice Note 2023. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on another person, and I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

### **Attachments**

- 5 Attached to this evidence as **Appendix A** are revised plans: P J Baxter - Godley Peak Station Amended Concept Drawing Set dated 16 March 2026, which includes revisions in response to the Planners Section 42A Report (and Peer Review Reports).

### **Involvement in the project**

- 6 I first visited the project site on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024. At that first visit I was familiar with the form and character of the project, being in receipt of the original architectural plans. My original brief was to focus on the proposed

homestead and its immediate environs. I am familiar with the proposed collection of building forms that together are referred to as the 'homestead'. To that end, my role in the design process has been to visually 'embed' the proposed homestead into the landscape within which it is to be located.

- 7 During the design process and the preparation of relevant plans, I have worked closely with Ben Espie from Vivian Espie who has undertaken the landscape assessment and has prepared evidence for this hearing.
- 8 Whilst I have not undertaken the landscape Assessment for this proposal, I am cognisant of that process having undertaken numerous landscape assessments during my career.
- 9 As is typical in a project of this nature, the design has evolved over the last 2 years as we have responded to feedback from others in the consultant team, and from matters raised by submitters, as well as peer review of Yvonne Pfluger on behalf of McKenzie District Council.
- 10 My involvement in the design process to date can be summarised as follows:
  - 10.1 Undertake a site visit and familiarise myself with the proposed development locale and the wider site and environs.
  - 10.2 Undertake preliminary landscaping, levels and vegetation plans, responding to feedback from the consultant team
  - 10.3 Undertake a site visit to take photographs from the lake surface, noting poles erected on site to describe the proposal and to enable computer modelling.
  - 10.4 Having been supplied with 3D models from the Architect, supervise 3D modelling in office and superimpose architectural forms and proposed planting on photographs from viewpoints supplied by others and from lake views towards the proposal undertaken by myself. The methodology in preparing the visuals was described in the original filed set of plans.
  - 10.5 Ongoing liaison with the consultant team designing landform shaping and planting patterns and advising on required changes to levels and planting patterns to reduce the perceived scale of the dwelling from identified viewpoints.

- 10.6 Working closely with the ecologist (Glenn Davis) and other members of the consultant team to ensure the selection of indigenous plant species deemed to be appropriate to this location.
- 10.7 Responding to matters raised by the Landscape Peer reviewer, and working with the consultant team, undertaking revisions to the masterplan, the amended building levels, the building locations and the planting layouts to achieve an agreed appropriate level of visual mitigation of the proposal, principally from lake views

### **Summary of the proposed Landscape Masterplan/design**

#### *Building Form, Building Levels, Location, Layout and Proposed Land Shaping*

- 11 The principal design goal, as indicated on the landscape masterplan, is to set the buildings into the landform and establish a contiguous pattern of indigenous planting around the buildings, extending that planting well out from the buildings to enable those planting patterns to be of a scale appropriate to the surrounding landscape and avoiding a 'domestic' scale of planting.
- 12 In general, whilst occupying a large, combined footprint in total, the proposed homestead and associated buildings are a collection of moderately sized architectural forms, clad in stone with a consistent palette of dark grey steel roof cladding. From lake views not all of the parts of the proposal will be visible, with many parts of the proposal being visually internalised, screened behind those forms visible from the lake.
- 13 Particularly in relation to the most sensitive viewpoints (as identified by Mr Espie and Ms Pfluger<sup>1</sup>) I have produced cross sections to calculate proposed mitigation outcomes (and growth periods).
- 14 The proposed design incorporates both land shaping and mass planting designed to achieve the desired outcome around the homestead (the proposal) and workshop, utilising the cut from the building construction excavation and redistributing that in an appropriate scale and form.
- 15 The design of mass indigenous plantings around the homestead and further beyond the homestead utilises a plant selection that is endemic to the site and wider landscape.

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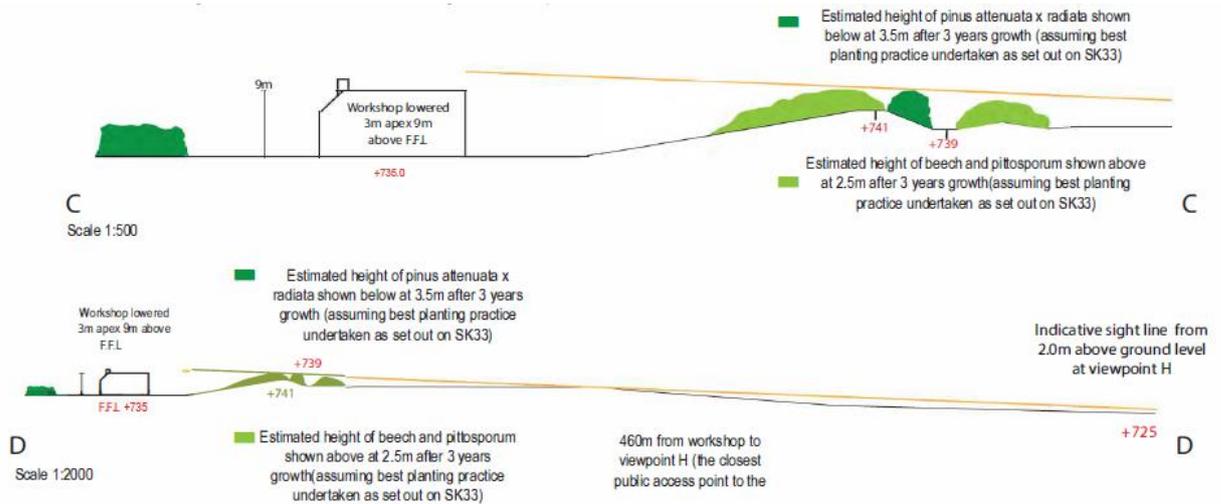
<sup>1</sup> Evidence of Mr Espie at [28]

- 16 The proposed shape and form of the contouring is substantial and at an appropriate scale, in order to replicate the gentle rolls of glacial moraine found in the locale, avoiding any steep sided and unnatural 'mounding' forms. This is shown on **4559 – SK40 Masterplan**, where the proposed land shaping / earthworks are shown in dashed contour lines, located to provide amenity and visual mitigation.
- 17 No lawn areas are proposed to the north of the homestead, where typically lawn areas would be located. Instead, planting will be bought directly to all edges of the building forms that make up the homestead, aside from the internal access courtyard and a deck area directly north of the centre of the homestead. Some small areas of lawn are shown on the plan above behind and between buildings and proposed landform.
- 18 In general, the proposal shows the bulk of the earthshaping is to be undertaken south and southwest of the homestead and associated buildings, providing (with planting) a visual backdrop to the proposal to lake views.

### **Response to Planners Report and Landscape Peer Review**

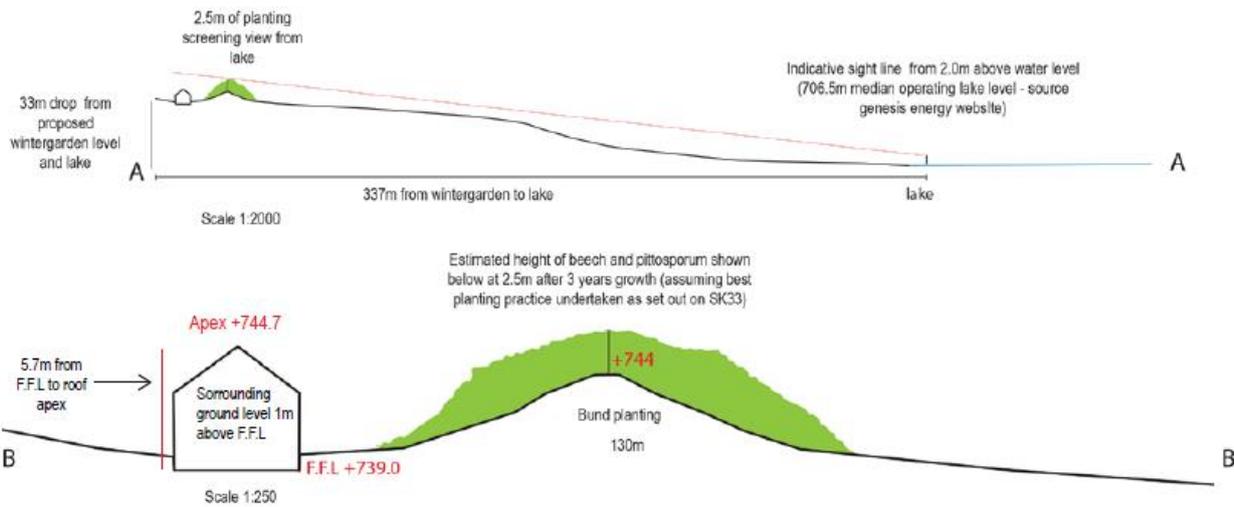
#### *Workshop Building Amendments*

- 19 During the course of design changes undertaken in response to the Landscape Peer Review, the most substantive amendment has been the relocation of the workshop building to a revised location approximately 25 metres to the southwest of its original submitted location, and the lowering of the workshop building. This, in association with the proposed landscaping north of the workshop building, will provide screening of that building from lake views to the north.
- 20 The proposed landscaping, being a combination of earthworks and planting, is still cognisant to achieve mitigation in the short term for the relocated workshop building (over the 3-year period) identified. The cross sections on **sheet 4559-SK43** shows the proposed revised landscaping. In short, the proposed workshop building has been lowered 3m from its notified position and that, combined with the contoured earthworks and planting will satisfy screening requirements (reproduced below for ease of reference).



### Wintergarden Building Amendments

- 21 The proposed 'wintergarden' building floor level is at 739.00 masl (masl = metres above sea level). The proposed structure has also been reduced from lowered from 6.7 metres in height (as originally notified, to 5.7 metres in height). Proposed land shaping has been added to the east and northeast of the structure, rising to 744.00 masl in height at its highest point.
- 22 Taking into account the ridge of the roof line of the wintergarden being at 744.7 masl and the height of the proposed planting on that landshaping, the proposed building will be screened from lake views. Mr Burgess' evidence confirms that effects in relation to glint/glare will be less than minor provided his recommendations are secured.
- 23 My plans align with Mr Burgess' requirements to have the Wintergarden roof Apex at 744.7 masl and a bund of 744 masl (with additional mitigation plantings to be secured to 2.5m in height after 3 years).
- 24 The cross section on the sheet **45998 – SK37** shows the proposed landshaping described above (reproduced below for ease of reference).



### Proposed Planting

- 25 A broad cover of indigenous plantings has been overlaid over the designed contours, with that planting extending the proposed planting well past the immediate environs of the proposed homestead. The proposed planting is shown in sheet **4556-SK40**.
- 26 This maintains a similar scale, form and amenity to that originally filed however it has been modified to reflect ongoing advice in regard to plant selection and changes made in the workshop location and land form redesign associated with those changes.
- 27 The proposed planting is set out in 7 broad mixes of planting palettes (**refer 4559 – SK41**) including:
1. Mid – Low Native Selection, covering 9,411m<sup>2</sup>
  2. Faster Growing Native Selection, covering 1,768m<sup>2</sup>
  3. Higher Native Selection, covering 3,761m<sup>2</sup>
  4. Halls Totoro, covering 1,328m<sup>2</sup>
  5. Tussock selection, covering 3,390m<sup>2</sup>
  6. Riparian Planting Selection, covering 1,300m<sup>2</sup>
  7. Beech trees, covering 3,518 m<sup>2</sup>
- 28 The total area of proposed planting is approximately 22,450m<sup>2</sup> in size (2.245ha), being a substantial area of planting.

- 29 The only change to the planting palettes is a change from *Pittosporum Eugenioides* to *Pittosporum tenuifolium* within Palette (2) in accordance with the recommendation within the evidence of Mr Davis.

#### *Lakeface Planting*

- 30 In addition, we have included the lake face planting area (**refer 4599 SK44**), which has been incorporated in the 'wider planting context'. I refer to Mr Davis evidence in relation to best practice planting recommendations for this planting, as I understand these were originally proposed on the basis of biodiversity enhancement. I refer to his evidence on this planting:

*In addition, Ms Pfluger makes recommendation that the lake face plantings are to be incorporated in the landscape master plan. I have no issue with this recommendation. I do note these plantings have been proposed for biodiversity enhancement and not intended for immediate fast growth landscape mitigation. As a result, the fast growth performance requirements applied to other mitigation areas do not apply to this specific area of lake face planting, which is intended to develop naturally over time. The species selected are tolerant of dry conditions however the use of plant shelters and mulch over 10 cm thick is recommended to protect the plants from high winds and pests and improve soil moisture retention. I consider that proposed condition 8 (landscape planting and maintenance plan) will appropriately ensure that appropriate measures are utilised.*

- 31 These best practice planting recommendations can be secured through implementation of the Landscape Planting and Maintenance Plan (**LPMP**).

#### *Temporary Shelter Planting*

- 32 In order provide shelter and to assist growth rates and provide shelter I have recommended (**refer 4599 SK44**) that *Pinus attentua x radiata*, a fast-growing pine variant, be planted in groups as indicated on that plan. That pine species has been used in other locations in the McKenzie District for the purpose of containing wilding spread. Below is a photograph that shows

similar pine mitigation (seed spread) planting that has been undertaken south of the Balmoral Army Camp, adjacent to the highway.



Source: Google Maps Streetview 2023

- 33 I note that the photograph above shows pine planting approximately 2 years of age. The planting is now approximately 3-3.5m high. That planting would be removed when native planting reaches approximately 2.5m in height. This provides additional certainty that the growth rates associated with mitigation plantings are achieved as discussed below.

#### *Growth Rate of Mitigation Planting*

- 34 I am cognisant of the local climatical conditions and to that end the planting will require appropriate irrigation, an appropriate quantity of quality imported topsoil / compost mix to be included with all proposed planting and suitable rabbit / hare proof fencing around all proposed planting. These recommendations are included in the Masterplan and should be secured through the LPMP implementation process.
- 35 I have worked closely with the ecologist, Mr Davis, on the planting set out in the attached plans. Assuming the matters set out in my evidence are undertaken in regards to shelter, fencing, compost / soil mix, irrigation, and best practice methods are in place, I would estimate the planting mixes 2,3 and 7 described above to be in the order of 2.5 -3m in height within 3 growing seasons. The provision of Temporary Shelter Planting (*Pinus attentua x radiata*) provides additional certainty that this will occur.
- 36 Once establishment is secured then the scale of the proposed planting will provide a planting habitat which is self-perpetuating. I also note that shelter (from predominant winds) will be provided in many locations of the proposal by the proposed landform and the buildings.

37 I note that there will be an opportunity for planting to be undertaken in many parts of the proposal well before building construction is completed. This is already incorporated, and I support within the proposed LPMP condition.

**Patrick J Baxter**

**Dated 16 March 2026**