

**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.

**EVIDENCE OF FRANCIS ALAN ALEXANDER WHITAKER ON
BEHALF OF GODLEY PEAKS STATION (ARCHITECT)**

16 March 2026

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MAY IT PLEASE THE PANEL:

Credential and Experience

Current Position

- 1 My full name Francis Alan Alexander Whitaker. I am a Registered Architect and Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

Qualification and Experience

- 2 I have worked in architectural practices for 45 years and have been a Director of Mason and Wales Architects for the last 30 years, and now as a Director of Whitaker Architects.
- 3 I designed the proposed residence at Godley Peaks Station (the **Application**) for Warren Lewis/Godley Peaks Station (the **Applicant**) whilst at Mason and Wales and now act for them as a consultant when required for the continuity of selected projects.
- 4 I have considerable experience in the design of most building typologies and especially residential projects, many of which have been for single dwellings in natural landscapes including Closeburn Station house which is placed within a clearing of NZ Native Beech on a raised plateau overlooking Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown. The Closeburn Lodge won the 2023 Southern Architecture Award.

Environment Court Practice Note

- 5 I acknowledge that I have read and am familiar with the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses, contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023, and agree to comply with it.
- 6 Other than where I state that I am relying on the advice of another person, I confirm that the issues addressed in this statement are within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

Scope of Evidence

- 7 The proposed design for Godley Peak Station Homestead has been outlined in the Architects Statement (**Statement**) dated 25 July 2024. I do not repeat the content of that Statement but instead emphasise the key components of my brief and how those components have been integrated into the building design.

- 8 The Statement discusses the broad background of the Applicant's interest, reasons, and longing to establish a suitable homestead and vision for the protection of the Station. A 'Homestead' is important to the land because it provides a functional and symbolic centre for stewardship, enabling the day-to-day management, occupation, and long-term care of the land. What I have designed is an 'honest' and 'simple' design focussed on permanence of occupation and the demanding materials that will survive a harsh environment in the long term. The Homestead is for Godley Peaks Station, not just Mr Lewis.
- 9 The Statement discusses the nature of the site, and the positioning of the Homestead on the land, together with the characteristics of the existing flora, management and enhancement of the land within a self-imposed Farm Biodiversity Plan. The overall form and layout of the Homestead comprise a cluster of rectangular 'barn like' forms that collectively enclose a series of sheltered and functional outdoor courtyard spaces. In this respect, the cluster brings the buildings together not only spatially, but also functionally. The visuals prepared by Mr Baxter to further reinforce this cohesion, visually unifying the individual building elements into a coherent whole.
- 10 I acknowledge that amendments to the design to reduce the potential visual impact of the workshop building have been recommended and adopted by the Applicant; however, from a design perspective, particularly in terms of the physical connection between buildings, I consider the original location to be preferable. Where the workshop building has been re-positioned is moderately close in proximity and still maintains reasonably good access, although not optimal.
- 11 The layout and form of the Homestead have been specifically arranged to manage the challenging climatic conditions of the region and the location of the site. In this respect I have recommended permanent design materials. The environment factors at this site would be unforgiving on a 'delicate' house design.
- 12 The architectural design reveals a very appropriate response in a series of very simple and robust building structures that are reminiscent of the Welsh or Scottish Croft style housing found in harsh environments where stone has been abundant on the land. Additionally, the form adopts simple barn-like building forms, particularly when viewed from the lake. This is a common architectural typology reflective of design across high country stations and, in my opinion, is appropriate for this location.

Response to Section 42A Report

- 13 We acknowledge the s42A Report which is supported by Landscape Peer review prepared by Yvonne Pfluger of Boffa Miskell Ltd which recommends that the workshop should be positioned further away at a lower level to help integrate the proposal into the landscape in this new location. As described above, I would prefer to maintain the closer proximity of the workshop to reinforce the Homestead buildings as a coherent and connected cluster, although understand this has been adopted by the Applicant. I accept it does not undermine the integrity of the overall design.
- 14 I actually observe a strong degree of alignment between Ms Pfluger's report and my opinions expressed above, particularly in her support for the use of permanent materials, including stone-faced elements, which she considers appropriate having regard to the location and the established character of the area.¹ Ms Pfluger's also agreed that the siting of a homestead associated with a high-country station is not out of character when compared with other similar locations within the Mackenzie District.² To me, this directly reinforces the underlying concept of this design which is about providing a true 'Homestead' for Godley Peaks Station.

Design Revisions

- 15 I attach as **Appendix A** to this evidence, the revised Architectural Plan incorporating the relocation of the workshop building.

Francis Alan Alexander Whitaker

Dated 18 March 2026

¹ Ms Pfluger's Peer Review Report at 5.29

² At 5.31