

# **Southern Discoveries Ltd Staff Accommodation- Cleddau Village**

## **Landscape and Visual Assessment**



Prepared for Southern Discoveries Ltd

January 2019



**BLAKELY WALLACE  
ASSOCIATES**

# **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

## **Southern Discoveries Staff Accommodation - Cleddau Village, Milford Sound/Piopiotahi**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This landscape and visual assessment accompanies the application for a concession and resource consent to develop a Staff Accommodation complex at Cleddau Village, Milford Sound/Piopiotahi.

The report includes the following:

- Description of the site and surrounding landscape context
- Description of proposal and overview of design
- Assessment of landscape and visual effects in terms of 2010 Village consent, the Cleddau Village Design Guidelines, and SDC District Plan Provisions.
- Conclusions

### **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT**

The site for the staff accommodation is identified as lease areas B2 and H3 of the Cleddau Village Accommodation Area. The two sites are at the entrance to the Village on the intersection of the road to Deep Water Basin and the eastern end of the Milford Sound airport runway. The sites are situated either side of the entrance to Pembroke Drive, within the southern cul de sac of the Cleddau Village.

Cleddau Accommodation Area is part of Milford Sound and is within Fiordland National Park and World Heritage Area. Milford Sound Village is located at the head of Milford Sound at the junction of the Cleddau and Arthur Rivers. The Fiordland Sounds are characterised by near vertical and sheer mountain slopes that plunge several hundred metres to the sea and a similar distance below the water level. It is a spectacular area of rugged mountains formed from the uplift of hard rock and shaped by glacial and fluvial action. Beech /kamahi rainforest is the dominant vegetation which extend from waterline to the upper bushline. The Milford Sound Village is located on the Cleddau Delta at the base of the steep mountain slopes formed by the Cleddau River. Shallow tidal flats surround the Delta. The Village is divided by the airport and consists of

Freshwater Basin with wharf, Terminal building, and visitor and staff accommodation on one side, and the Cleddau Village Staff Accommodation Area and Deepwater Basin on the other side of the airport.

The Cleddau Accommodation Area is divided into two main housing areas separated by an enclave of mature beech/ kamahi forest. The staff accommodation area was lifted 2m to mitigate flood protection following consent in 2010. Most of the lease areas have been taken up by concessionaires who have long term leases from the Department of Conservation. A 10 m wide buffer of bunding and planting surrounds the southern side of the village as well as a planted buffer between the airport runway and the Village. The bunding is at least 2m high with planting adding another 2 or 3 m after 8 years of growth. This planting will grow taller.

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL AND OVERVIEW OF DESIGN**

The application by Southern Discoveries is for new staff Accommodation across the two lease areas to house up to 65 staff. The masterplan for Milford by the Department of Conservation is for all staff accommodation to be located in the Cleddau Village. Currently Southern Discoveries have staff housed in sub-standard Accommodation at Freshwater Basin.

The staff Accommodation is on two levels and is divided into three accommodation categories to fit the needs of different employee groups. These include:

1. Seasonal and junior staff (Block A on Area B2)- Two storey dwelling with three living modules each designed with 8 bedrooms - total 24 rooms with shared bathrooms and cooking lounge areas.
2. Team leaders (Block B on Area H3). These are units with ensuite bathrooms and shared kitchen and lounge space.
3. Managers and long term staff (Block C on Area H3)- contains 18 self contained units of 28m<sup>2</sup> that include bedroom/lounge/cooking area with ensuite bathrooms plus one larger shared lounge space.

27 Carparks are proposed either side of Pembroke Drive.

## 4. ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

### Permitted baseline

The Landuse consent for the Cleddau Residential Activity was granted by the Southland District Council on the 29 November, 2010 (Consent Number 360/10/10/189C). Condition 9.5 directs 'That all future residential activity in the Cleddau Village shall be carried out in general accordance with the Cleddau Village Design Guidelines' (CVDG), Version 2.0 August 2010.

This landscape and visual assessment primarily uses the CVDG to assess this proposal. However since the 2010 granting of the Landuse consent the Southland District Council has reviewed its District Plan. Relevant provisions of the now Operative District Plan are also addressed. In the new plan Milford Sound is now classified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL).

### Landscape Assessment

The assessment of landscape and visual effects comprises two parts.

- the visual effects of the development from public places.
- the assessment of landscape effects. This deals with the effects of change on the landscape as a resource, the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character.

### Visual Effects of the development from public places

Area B2 and H3 are located at the entrance to the Cleddau Village in a reasonably prominent location. The accommodation area is surrounded by a 10 m wide and approx. 2m high planted bund which will partly screen the development. Notwithstanding the proposed buildings will be visible from a number of public places. Comment on the visual effects of the development from each of the locations is included below:

- From SH94. The development will be visible from the intersection of SH94 and Deepwater Basin, a distance of approximately 330m. Views to the site are also available from several locations north of the intersection with Deepwater Basin Road in views south west where vegetation is open along the highway. These

views are at a distance of approximately 200m.

Visual Effects: The development will be visible from all these locations and will introduce a new buildings 7.5m high. There are already buildings visible in these views but are lower and single storey. The buildings will be backdropped by high mountain slopes and existing vegetation.

- Eastern end of airport runway and from the Airport parking and dropoff. From the eastern end of the runway is approximately 70m to the proposed site and from the Airport carpark/dropoff approx. 300m.

Visual Effects: The development will be visible from both the eastern end of the runway and from the Airport carpark. From the eastern end of the runway the development will be reasonably prominent but can be absorbed in this location.

From the Airport carpark the development will be visible as a new feature in the view. At present buildings are difficult to see from this location. The development will be absorbed easily in this view and will not detract from visual amenity.

- From Deepwater Basin Road.

Visual Effects: The development will be visible to varying degrees on Deepwater Basin Road and from the carpark between Deepwater Basin and the Cleddau River. The upper third of the building on H3 will be visible along side Deepwater Basin Road. At the eastern end of Deepwater Basin (between the intersection of SH94 and the entrance to Cleddau Village the buildings will be moderately visible and there will be a new built element which is higher than exists at present. There will be a degree of blocking of the low view but not to an unacceptable extent. Two level buildings were anticipated in these locations.

### Summary of Visual Effects from public places

In all cases it is considered the development can be absorbed from these identified locations with no adverse visual effects. There will be a new building on two levels up to 7.5m in a relatively prominent location. However in the context of Milford Sound the proposed buildings are small in relation to the scale of the surrounding mountainous landscape. The buildings are well designed and the combined effects of the existing buffer planting and the existing mature beech/kamihi forest, in addition to the proposed mitigation planting will ensure it fits with the receiving environment.

The buffer planting on Deepwater Basin Road, and on the intersection with the Accommodation Area is now well established and the combined height of the bund and planting is approximately 4-5m high which means that only the upper third of the proposed building will be visible when close to the site. In addition the planting separating the airport runway from the Cleddau Village will soften the effect of the buildings. The combined effects of a well designed and detailed building and the existing bunding and vegetation, plus the proposed planting will ensure the development does not detract from public areas where it can be viewed, and will be a positive addition at the entrance to the Accommodation area.

The development will also be visible from other public areas such as from the Arthur River and all surrounding areas which are all within Fiordland National Park. With the distance viewed from any other location the development will be 'difficult to see' and will blend and merge with other development and will have little or no adverse effects. The development will also be viewed from the air which is significant given the aircraft use at Milford Sound. However for the same reasons discussed above the development can be absorbed in this location with no adverse visual effects.

### **Cleddau Village Design Guidelines**

The CVDG require all new development in the Cleddau Village to complement the natural setting; blend in as part of the setting and at the same time encourage a distinctive style to emphasise the special nature of the place.

The guidelines also seek to avoid a haphazard, piecemeal approach to development which creates visual clutter or incoherence, and which is inconsistent with the intent of the Fiordland National Park Management Plan.

The Guidelines list 9 bullet points (overall objectives) which new development should aim to comply with. The Southern Discoveries proposal is addressed in regard to these 9 points in the comments below.

*New buildings and facilities blend with the natural environment, emphasising non-intrusive design.*

**Comment:** The buildings are well designed with modulated forms and varied roof shapes but is at the same time restrained and unobtrusive.

*Avoidance of a typical suburban subdivision model in terms of layout, buildings and landscape.*

**Comment:** The design is not a typical suburban model and responds to the site and specific use required by the activity and the client.

*A unified and coherent development appropriate to the National Park setting.*

**Comment:** The development is a high quality unified and coherent development which is appropriate to the National Park setting. It will be a positive addition located at the entrance to the Village off Deep Water Basin Road and contribute positively to the overall appearance of the Village. Materials and colours are appropriate.

*Retention of natural site character where possible, including setting, materials, and ecological processes*

**Comment:** The natural site character has been removed by the lifting of the Village platform and other human induced changes. The dominant aspect of natural site character is the wider setting in which it is located at Milford Sound. The planted bund on the periphery of the site is a new positive feature and the planting has reached a level of maturity where it mitigates the effects of the residential development. The development will sit within this planted bund which will have the effect of softening the buildings and reducing their dominance. Additional planting proposed for this development will further soften and screen the development when established.

*Built structures fit in with their sites rather than dominate them. Buildings are subordinate to the environment.*

**Comment:** Built structure fit with the site and in the context of the scale of Milford Sound and surrounding mountains, will not dominate and will be subordinate.

Coordination and integration of the design of individual structures with those of the site plan as a whole

**Comment:** Though the buildings are larger than most others in the accommodation area in site coverage and height, the forms, materials and colours are consistent and appropriate. The CVDG anticipates and encourages some multi- storied structures (including on H3 and B2) to provide diversity and interest.

Enhancement of unifying architectural and landscape themes and elements within the Village.

**Comment:** Roof forms and other architectural elements are consistent with simple, unfussy backcountry forms found elsewhere in the village which contributes to a unifying theme. Planting style will be an ecological/revegetation style consistent with the rest of the village and within Milford Sound to enhance naturalness and natural appearance.

Creation of a bush setting for the Village appropriate to the National Park

**Comment:** The existing bund and adjoining mature beech/kamihi forest contributes to a bush setting. New planting will be added wherever there is space and where it fits in with the use of the site. This will add to the bush setting.

Emphasis on simplicity and restraint in design.

**Comment:** The proposed development though reasonably intensive is simple and restrained in design and appropriate to the setting.

The CVDG then deals with specific guidelines including;

**(5) Site layout/Design**

**(6) Building Design**

**(7) Landscape Design**

These are discussed below with respect to the Southern Discoveries Ltd application.

**(5) Site Layout/Design**

The development generally meets the Objectives in 5.1 however it does not comply with the Methods to Achieve the Objectives with respect to Setbacks and Site Coverage but does comply with Aspect /Orientation.



To solve Southern Discoveries Ltd staff accommodation current and future needs, and to utilise the limited space available (these are the last lease areas available) a more intensive density is necessary. It is not possible to achieve this with the 3m setback requirement and the 40% site coverage as well as provide carparking within the setback.

The CVDG anticipated that not all development would comply with the Guidelines and a process to deal with this was put in place i.e. a review by the Milford Design Review Board (DRB).

In my opinion a more dense development and breach of the setback and site coverage requirement is justified. Eight years after the consent for the residential activity was granted most of the space is taken up and the need for staff accommodation has increased significantly with the growth in tourism and corresponding increase visitation to Milford Sound. In addition the CVDG envisaged that most of the lease areas on Pembroke Drive would be double storied though so far all are single storey. Double storey was allowed for on the south west sector of the Village due to the screening effect of the existing Beech/Kamahi trees in the centre of the village which would allow for larger buildings to be absorbed more easily in this location. Furthermore site B2 and H3 now has established vegetation on the peripheral bund adjacent to H3 and the mature beech trees exist next to B2. To an extent this negates the need for the setback which was intended to 'allow for continuity of vegetation within the village' ie there is already continuity of vegetation around the site.

## **(6) Building Design**

It is considered that the building design generally complies with the objectives and methods to achieve. Building form has been broken into logical elements that fit the site and the mass of the building has been successfully broken down. Darker colour are proposed and double storey buildings are allowed for on these lease areas. Exterior cladding complies with the guidelines as does roofing guidelines.

Bin storage is provided in designated screened areas.

## **(7) Landscape Design**

The overall objectives for landscape design (7.1) have been complied with. The landscape layout and design is unified and coordinated. Indigenous plant material local to Milford Sound are proposed and landscape surfaces and materials used where possible.

Earthworks (7.2) and Stormwater Control (7.4) will be complied with to meet objectives.

Plants and Planting (7.6) will fully comply with objectives.

Lighting (7.8) will preserve the night time ambience of the national park and ensure that light spill and night sky pollution is kept to a minimum, whilst maintaining a need for safety and security.

Signage will be designed to meet the objectives.

### **Carparking**

Space for carparking is limited due to the land area available in the B2 and H3 blocks, and the building area that is required to accommodate up to 65 staff. To provide the required number of carparks, it is proposed that 27 parking spaces be provided on either side of Pembroke Drive between the lease boundary and the formed road.

While this is not consistent with the CVDG there is no alternative to achieve the required level of accommodation within the constraints of the B2 and H3 blocks.

To mitigate the carparking, the carpark spaces are broken up into bays consisting of three 90 degree parks which are separated from the next bay either by planting or pedestrian access to the buildings. The substantial planting will break up and soften the effects of the carparks. In addition the compacted local gravel surface to the carparks will provide a more organic appearance and will soften the effects of the carparks to a significant and acceptable extent (refer to renders 1 to 3 included with the landscape plan).

## **5. SDC OPERATIVE DISTRICT PLAN**

### **21.21.1. Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONF and ONL)**

Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes have been identified in the SDC Operative District Plan as the top tier of Landscape under Section 6 of the RMA 1991. Milford Sound and Fiordland is identified as ONL.

The District Plan states that activities located in areas of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes are to be protected from inappropriate subdivision, landuse and development.

The subdivision of the Cleddau Village has been allowed for by the granting of consent in 2010 and the CVDG are intended to provide guidance on the design of buildings and landscape within the Village. As stated this application largely adheres to the overall objectives of DGs but does not comply with site coverage and setbacks Guidelines or carparking requirements. In this case it is considered that there is justification and good reason as discussed above to relax the CVDG with respect to site coverage and setback and view this application as a special case.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

1. The proposal is for the development of staff accommodation within the Cleddau Village Residential Activity Area in lease areas B2 and H3.
2. The proposal is consistent with the Department of Conservations masterplan for Milford Sound to house all staff accommodation at Cleddau Village. Southern Discoveries Ltd have a pressing need to provide for quality staff housing to replace sub-standard housing at Freshwater Basin.
3. Double story buildings are envisaged on B2 and H3 in the consent documents.
4. The proposed development can be absorbed on this two sites without adverse landscape and visual effects. The existing vegetation and established planting on the bunds as well as proposed planting will mitigate and soften the development.
5. The development adheres to many of the Guidelines in the CVDGs apart for site coverage and setbacks. It is not possible to achieve the current and future staff housing needs on one site in Cleddau Village without a reasonably intensive design.
6. The landscape and visual effects of the proposed development are assessed as minor.

Philip Blakely

Registered Landscape Architect

**Blakely Wallace Associates**

January, 2019



Landscape Architecture, Resource Management, Rural, Residential, Commercial, Urban, Project & Contract  
Management, Streamlining Consent Process, Conservation (Natural & Historic) Advice

## APPENDIX I – PHOTOS



Photo 1. View towards site and entrance to Cleddau Village from Deepwater Basin Road.



Photo 2. View south west towards site from intersection of SH94 and Deepwater Basin Road (Distance approx. 330m)

## APPENDIX I – PHOTOS



Photo 3. View west from intersection of Sinbad Drive and Pembroke Drive. Lease area H3 on left and B2 on right.



Photo 4. View from Sinbad Drive parallel with Area B2. There will be some blocking of this view by the development.

## APPENDIX I – PHOTOS



Photo 5. View SW from SH94 across Airport runway to site B2 & H3. Note the windsock is close to the site and height of proposed buildings. The buildings will be a new element in this view but are backdropped by the steep mountain slopes behind and adjacent to the tall beech/kamahahi trees on the right which will allow the development to be absorbed in this view.



Photo 6. View to site from Airport parking and drop -off/pick up. Note the Windsock is visible in the middle background. The development will be visible from this location (approx. 300m).

## APPENDIX I – PHOTOS



Photo 7. View west on Deepwater Basin Road and entrance to Cleddau Village showing planted vegetation on bund after 8 years growth.



Photo 8. View west of site B2



## APPENDIX I – PHOTOS



Photo 9. View SE of Site H3 (currently used as overflow carpark)

## APPENDIX I – PHOTOS



Photo 10. View SW from north of intersection of SH94 and Deepwater Basin Road



Photo 11. View east along Deepwater Basin Road from raised walking track. Planted buffer separating Deepwater Basin Rd and Cleddau Village on left.

**APPENDIX 2 – RENDERS**

**Renders 1**



Renders 2



Renders 3

