MEMO

Department of Conservation

Concession Application: 74167-Ski

Request for Further Information: Coronet Peak Ski Field

NZSKI Limited

9 July 2019

INTRODUCTION

This Memo provides further information as requested in a letter from the Department of Conservation to the applicant, dated 24 June 2019. This letter refers to a request dated 17 May 2019, reproduced below:

1. ***Landscape Assessment***

   The Patch landscape assessment dated October 2018 is for already approved infrastructure - Coronet Peak express chairlift replacement. The assessment does not sufficiently cover the proposed new activities at the Coronet Peak ski field. This assessment needs to be redone to:

   (a) describe in more detail the landscape effects (not just visual but include natural character) of gondolas on the replacement express chairlift, not the chairlift itself. The recently approved replacement express chairlift should be put in the preamble context in the landscape report for the gondola;

(b) for consideration of the effects of the gondola cabins operating on the chairlift, require a visual simulation of the gondola cabins from both on and off conservation lands and waters;
(c) include an assessment of landscape effects (visual and natural character) of proposed summer snow operation. No assessment of this activity was provided in application;
(d) include landscape effect of night-skiing and visual and natural character of proposal to increase this to 7 days per week.

2. The Department requests further information with regard items 1(a) to 1(c) to enable a decision to be made. That request, received 24 June 2019 is reproduced below:

It is requested that the Patch Landscape Assessment for the proposed gondola activities is updated and resubmitted taking into account the following:

1. Only two vantage points from off the ski area were supplied. These are from the Skippers Saddle turnoff and directly beneath the bulk of Coronet Peak. More views, such as looking north-west across the skyline that this proposal would interrupt in its upper reach, from the vicinity of semi-rural Arrowtown, would be helpful;

2. the visual simulations on pages 14-15 are dominated by powerlines, the photos are dark and distorted, and the views of the chairlift and gondola cabins are obscured by cloud cover;

3. better visual simulation showing the impact of gondola cabins during summer i.e. without snow in the background. These could presumably use stock photos;

4. The gondola cabins are described as being mostly glass. No consideration is given as to the reflective nature of this and how that might be avoided, such as from early/late sunstrike.

This information is required, firstly to enable the Department to start assessing the application in more detail and secondly, will be required to better inform the

public during public notification. The details will enable the Department to understand the full scope of existing and proposed activities at Coronet Peak ski field within the Coronet Peak Recreation Reserve.

RESPONSE

3. The following portion of this report will respond to the requests contained within the 24 June 2019 letter from the Department. Request Item 3 will be addressed first as it provides some clarification with respect to the request item's 1 and 2.

Request Item 3:

4. Visual simulations prepared by landscape architects are directed by the *Best Practice Guide, Visual Simulations BPG10.2* prepared by the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects. This best practice guide recommends:

6.2 - The preparation of photomontage based visual simulations generally involves the following steps –

i) The selection of a range of representative viewpoint locations from which photographs will be taken. Each camera viewpoint needs to be clearly identified and recorded in terms of its coordinates and elevation. In addition, appropriate reference points within the field of view also need to be identified, fixed and recorded. The SLR camera used to take the photographs should be capable of producing photographs at a high resolution and clarity.
ii) A 3D digital terrain model of the site and its wider environs is then created using appropriate 3D CAD software.
iii) A 3D computer model of the proposed activity or modification is then constructed and positioned within the 3D terrain model.
iv) Coinciding with the photographs taken in Step (i), the camera viewpoints are then registered within the digital terrain model using the survey fixed reference points and translated into the 3D wireframe computer model.

v) The 3D wireframe model is then superimposed over the photograph, utilising the known survey reference points and terrain features in order to register the two together.
vi) A fully rendered photo composite image is then produced.

5. Patch has been involved with this project since September 2018 and we undertook a Basin wide photographic and assessment site visit for the proposed Coronet Express chairlift which is now built. In preparing the simulations which form part of this concession and gondola cabin application, Patch was initially instructed by the applicant to assess the effects of the gondola cabins from *within* the Recreation Reserve. Upon receiving the Departments request for further information, letter dated 17th May 2019, the applicant instructed Patch to include assessments off public conservation land as well. We visited the site and took photographs in May 2019 while the site was not under the cover of snow. We also undertook photographic site visits on the 5th of June and again on the 5th and 7th of July. We took several images with a 50mm lens and recorded their location with a GPS.

6. It is not possible to create accurate simulations using stock photographs, or any other photograph where the exact location of the photograph and the focal length of the camera has not been recorded. The only image we are able to use in the preparation of accurate simulations are those with a recoded location and focal length, preferably ones taken by Patch. Therefore, we are not able to create simulations of the gondola from outside the Recreation Reserve in summer, without waiting until summer 2019 - 2020.

Request Item 1:

7. With regard to request item 1, three additional viewpoints have been added to the Visual Simulations Package; Views 6 – 8 (Attached). These simulations demonstrate the view from farther east along the Mallaghans Road corridor from semi-rural Arrowtown.

8. View 6 is adjacent to the east entrance of Millbrook and demonstrates that the Coronet Express lift line is not visible from this location.

9. View 7 is adjacent to the Millbrook west entrance, approximately 5km from the Coronet Express chairlift. Three images are included from this view depicting the existing view with chairs on the lift line, a simulation with the chairs removed from the lift line and a simulation with the proposed gondola cabins and chairs on the lift line.
10. View 8 is from Mallaghans Road near the junction with Alan Reid Road, approximately 3.65km from the Coronet Express chairlift. Three images are included from this view; the existing view with chairs on the lift line, a simulation with the chairs removed from the lift line and a simulation with the proposed gondola cabins and chairs on the lift line.
11. It is considered these simulations demonstrate that the proposed gondola cabins will result in negligible adverse visual effects from parts of the basin to the east, looking north-west across the skyline from the vicinity of semi-rural Arrowtown.

Request Item 2:

12. The existing context of Coronet Peak as viewed from the junction of Mallaghans Road and Hunter Road includes the presence of powerlines and other infrastructure. They are not dominant, but form part of the existing rural context. This viewpoint was included in the October 2018 Patch Landscape Assessment package.
13. The photographs which were taken on 5 June 2019 are dark because the main aspect of Coronet Peak is south facing, and in this time of year that south facing slope is in shadow. In preparing these simulations NZSki Ltd was undertaking extensive snow making in preparation for the approaching opening day. The mountain is not obscured by cloud cover but by the cover of man-made snow drift. The snow making machines were running constantly during the fine, cold days of June and Patch was unable to take images in a timely manner without the presence of the manmade snow.
14. It is considered that the effect of snowmaking, and the dark, south-facing slope render it easier to decipher and determine the level of the gondola cabin's visibility from this view. Their location and scale are clearly legible in *View 05 – Simulation with Proposed Gondola Cabins*. Any effect from the junction of Mallaghans Road and Hunter Road will be similar in scale to that experienced from the Mallaghans Road and Allan Reid Road depicted in View 8.

Request Item 4

15. Part 3.1 of the June 2019 *Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects* describes the gondola cabins as being clad mostly in glass, an assumption based on the concept designs. This is not entirely accurate. The gondola cabins will be clad mostly in optically transparent polycarbonate with a dark tint formed in a concave shape.

16. As discussed above, the Coronet Express chairlift ascends a south facing slope. This slope orientation generally screens any potential for glare and limits any potential effect of glare, reflectivity or sun strike to users within the Reserve. There may be an exception to this in the mid-summer months when the sun rises more to the southeast and sets farther to the southwest. This low sun angels will occur within the early morning and late evening hours while the gondola cabins are not in use and are stored off the lift line.

17. The ski area currently holds several buildings including the base building which is heavily glazed. The glazing on the base building and several ski-club buildings on the mountain does not currently result in any glare, reflectivity or sunstrike effects.

18. Polycarbonate is a plastic material and is not as reflective as glass. This material will be in a concave form which will reduce any surface area where sun might strike. Also, the gondola cabins will mostly be in motion when they are on the lift line and if sun strike were to effect any users within the Recreation Reserve, that instance would be fleeting and would result in very low adverse effects on visual amenity.

CONCLUSION

19. The chairs and gondola cabins will be visible from parts of the Reserve and surrounding places, including the Wakatipu Basin. It is important to note that the most visible part of the Coronet Peak Express Chairlift is the towers, which are parament structures. All chairs and gondola cabins will be off line when the activity they support is not in service and while it is in service, the chairs and cabins will be in motion. The gondola cabins will not increase any visual amenity

effects as experienced from the surrounding places and will appear part of the existing ski area infrastructure. There may be areas where the gondola cabins will obstruct views or create glare within the Recreation Reserve, but these moments will be fleeting as the cabins will be in motion and will result in very low adverse effects on visual amenity

Response prepared by:

Steve Skelton - Director, Patch Ltd.

patch

PO BOX 1634, Queenstown, 9348 · +64 (0)3 409 2878 · +64 (0)21 020 99933
steve@patchlandscape.co.nz · www.patchlandscape.co.nz