

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name: CRAIGROY

Lease number: PO 233

Public Submissions - Part 5

These submissions were received as a result of the public advertising of the Preliminary Proposal for Tenure Review.

July

10

New Zealand Historic Places Trust
Pouhere Taonga



Our Ref:
Your Ref:

Patron:
His Excellency The Hon
Anand Satyanand, FCNZM
Governor General of New Zealand

30 November 2009

262027

The Manager
Darroch Valuations
PO Box 215
DUNEDIN

Attn.: David Paterson
Tenure Review Consultant



Dear Mr Paterson

**CRAIGROY AND BEN NEVIS PASTORAL LEASE TENURE REVIEWS:
SUBMISSION FOR CRAIGROY PASTORAL LEASE PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL**

Thank you for your letter of 11 September 2009 concerning the above pastoral lease review.

The NZHPT is an autonomous Crown Entity and is New Zealand's lead agency in historic heritage management. Its purpose is to promote the identification, protection, preservation and conservation of the historical and cultural heritage of New Zealand, as provided for in Section 4(1) of the Historic Places Act 1993. The NZHPT's powers and functions are set out in Section 39 of the Historic Places Act.

The NZHPT has developed guidelines based on internationally recognised best practice to assist in the identification and protection of historic heritage values. This includes guidelines on assessing impacts on historic heritage. NZHPT monitors 'one off' opportunities such as this to ensure that the Crown's commitment to the identification, recognition and protection of significant inherent historic heritage values on pastoral lease lands subject to the tenure review process, is adequately dealt with.

The NZHPT has undertaken an extensive assessment of the heritage values of both the Ben Nevis and Craigroy Pastoral Leases. This is summarised in the report attached to this letter entitled - *Assessment of heritage values and recommendations for Ben Nevis & Craigroy pastoral leases*.

The report, as well as identifying the significant heritage values present in the Lower Nevis valley and specifically on the two pastoral leases, suggests the appropriate form of protection measures needed for the heritage values, as a consequence of this tenure review process.

The NZHPT assessment report commences with a brief historical overview of the Nevis Valley, to provide the context for the heritage assessment. This is followed by a description of historic heritage in the Lower Nevis Valley, the heritage assessment, a review of the proposed protection measures and recommendations by the NZHPT for improved heritage protection measures.

In addition to this assessment report, the NZHPT in late September 2009 publicly notified its Registration Report under the Historic Places Act 1993 for recognising a Lower Nevis Historic Area, which is based substantially on the extent of both these pastoral leases. A copy of this report was sent to Land Information New Zealand in September 2009. It is

noted that local authorities must have particular regard to the recommendations of the NZHPT with regard to any registered historic area under section 32D of the Historic Places Act 1993.

Based on the values identified in that report, the NZHPT considers that the heritage values of the historic places, structures, sites and artefacts and their contribution to the heritage landscape have not been adequately recognised in either the Ben Nevis or Craigroy pastoral lease preliminary proposals for tenure review. Accordingly, NZHPT is of the view that the preliminary proposals are deficient in regard to understanding the significance of the extensive heritage values on the pastoral leases. The NZHPT is very concerned that this lack of understanding is translated into the proposed conservation covenants (landscape), to be issued pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977, which do not appropriately address the heritage values.

The NZHPT is of the view that rather than attempt to incorporate the heritage values into what is clearly a biodiversity-based conservation covenant, these values would be more appropriately recognised and protected through a heritage covenant executed under the Historic Places Act 1993.

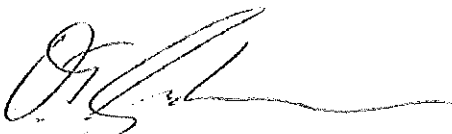
The NZHPT submits:

1. Section 24 of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 establishes the objectives of tenure review which include enabling the protection of significant inherent values of reviewable land by the creation of protective mechanisms and by the restoration of the land concerned to full Crown ownership and control.
2. Inherent values, as defined in the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 means a value relating to cultural, ecological, historical, recreational, scientific attributes, including characteristics of a historic place on the land.
3. The area, subject of the tenure review, has significant inherent values as identified by the NZHPT in its Registration Report for a Proposed Lower Nevis Historic Area and the attached heritage assessment.
4. Considering the significant inherent values of the Proposed Lower Nevis Historic Area, the NZHPT submits that the land should be restored to and retained in Crown control as conservation land. In time, the area of these leases could then form the link joining both the Remarkables and Kopuwait Conservation Areas.
5. That, in the event that the full extent of the Ben Nevis and Craigroy pastoral leases are not retained in crown control as conservation land, and the areas proposed for freeholding are confirmed, there should be put in place a heritage covenant pursuant to Section 40 of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 and Section 6 of the Historic Places Act 1993, that appropriately deals with the significant heritage values on both the Ben Nevis and Craigroy pastoral leases. Protective mechanisms, as defined in the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998, include heritage covenants under the Historic Places Act 1993.
6. In relation to areas of tenure review land containing significant inherent values that are historic heritage values, it is appropriate that the protective mechanism under the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 is a heritage covenant under the Historic Places Act 1993 rather than the more general method of a covenant under the Reserves Act 1977. As indicated in section 40(5) of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998, designation of land that is subject to a heritage covenant cannot occur without the prior written consent of the NZHPT.

7. That the extent of the heritage covenant should include those areas of both the Ben Nevis and Craigroy pastoral leases, contained within the NZHPT Lower Nevis Historic Area registration proposal. The heritage covenant should be executed between NZHPT and LINZ prior to freeholding.
8. In the event that the proposed conservation covenant (landscape) under the Reserves Act 1977 is progressed in relation to the tenure review, the NZHPT seeks substantial changes to ensure the adequate provision for historic heritage, in particular Schedule 1, clause 3, must contain a more adequate explanation of the historic heritage values that are to be protected and Schedule 2, clause 6 to be deleted in its entirety.

NZHPT would welcome an opportunity to discuss these matters further with the Commissioner. Should you have any queries, please feel free to contact me further.

Yours sincerely



Owen Graham
Area Manager (Otago/Southland)

cc. Secretary, Central Otago Branch Committee, NZHPT

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New Zealand
Historic Places Trust *Pouhere Taonga*

Assessment of heritage values and recommendations for
Ben Nevis & Craigroy
pastoral leases



www.nzarchaeology.org

17 November 2009

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Cover image: Gold workings in snow, lower Nevis Valley ((Kevin L. Jones/ Department of Conservation, <http://www.nzarchaeology.org/aerial/12.jpg>)

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This purpose of this report is to document the findings of the NZHPT's assessment of the heritage values of the Ben Nevis and Craigroy Pastoral Leases and to provide comment on the proposed protection measures arising from the tenure review process.

The report commences with a brief historical overview of the Nevis Valley, to provide the context for the heritage assessment. This is followed by a description of historic heritage in the Lower Nevis Valley, the heritage assessment, a review of the proposed protection measures and recommendations by the NZHPT for additional heritage protection measures.

The results of the assessment of the Ben Nevis and Craigroy Pastoral Leases are presented in this single report. The leases occur on either side of the Lower Nevis Valley. The Nevis River runs along the base of the valley and gold-bearing gravels are found stretching from the river up the valley slopes on both sides. The valley contains a network of interrelated historic places, structures and sites spanning the river, which forms the boundary for the leases. Where appropriate consideration has been given to individual places which lie in either lease.

1.2 Statement of work

This assessment draws on information obtained from research of historical sources, the review of heritage documents and inventories, and observations made during site visits by NZHPT staff over a number of years. For a list of sources consulted see the bibliography at the conclusion of this report.

1.3 Limitations

The Ben Nevis and Craigroy Pastoral Leases have not been the subject of systematic archaeological survey; therefore not all heritage places have been recorded. Archaeological survey was carried out in the early 1990s as part of the tenure review process; however, there were only limited time and resources available for these tasks. As a result, survey coverage focused on the most

obvious areas where archaeological evidence was present, and areas that were easily accessible.

In the Craigroy lease, survey appears to have been focused on the area between the river and the first terrace. During arranged site visits by NZHPT staff in early 2009 unrecorded gold mining features were noted across a wide area above the terrace (Figure 1)¹.



Figure 1: Unrecorded area of mining remains, Craigroy lease.

¹ Work affecting any archaeological sites present (recorded or not) is subject to the archaeological authority provisions under the Historic Places Act 1993. If any activity may modify, damage or destroy any archaeological site, an authority (consent) from the NZHPT must be obtained for the work prior to commencement.

2. Historical background

2.1 Maori heritage

Ngai Tahu has a long association with Central Otago and its rivers. Te Runanga o Otakou considers the Nevis holds many values for Otakou including kaitiakitanga, mauri, waahi tapu, waahi taoka and traditional trails. The traditional name for the Nevis River is Te Papapuni.² Reko (c1803-1868) led pastoralist Nathanael Chalmers, the first European to see the remote valley, from the Mataura River to the Nokomai and into the Nevis River in 1853.

2.2 Pastoral stations

The first pastoral stations in the Nevis Valley were (from north to south) the Kawarau, Hawksburn and Lorn Peak Runs.³ W.S. Trotter took up the neighbouring Rockside Run in the Upper Nevis in 1859, running sheep from Moeraki, through the Maniototo and over the Carrick Range, through the Lower Nevis Valley. Historian James Herries Beattie recounts that getting over the Carrick Range was no mean feat and was an arduous job even in good weather.⁴ The original Hawksburn Run took up most of the Lower Nevis basin and was taken up in 1859, with 12,000 sheep on the whole run by 1871. The Kawarau Station took up the remainder of the Lower Nevis Basin. In 1890 the Australian and New Zealand Land Company, leaseholders of the Kawarau Run, acquired the Hawksburn Run. The earliest possible date for the station buildings at Ben Nevis is 1859-1860, which compares with those of Galloway, the first Central Otago run to be settled.⁵

² Hoani Sydney Langsbury Project Manager of Te Runanga o Otakou Inc., Kaitiaki Runaka and Mana Whenua for the area, Submission on an application for an amendment to the Kawarau River Water Conservation Order, 2008.

³ Hamel, Sept 1994, Figure showing location of first runs (no page numbers).

⁴ James Herries Beattie, *Early Runholding in Otago*, Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspapers, Dunedin 1947, p.52.

⁵ Hamel, 1994, p.14.

2.3 Gold mining

After discovering gold at Nokomai, near the southern tip of Lake Wakatipu, miners made their way back to the Dunstan field via the Nevis Valley, finding gold at in its headwaters. The first prospectors made their way the Nevis in October 1862 and by November 1862 newspapers were reporting a rush to the Nevis, at the head of the valley, the gorge and the lower valley.⁶ By autumn 1863 the Nevis field had prospered and a small town (Nevis Township) developed at the Lower Nevis.⁷

There were isolated residences along the Nevis River heading south, serving the miners working the rich gullies. Five miles further distant was the Nevis Township, providing services for the some 1500 miners. The 'brisk little place' contained 60 thriving businesses running in a line along a 'street'. The remote location influenced the construction of the town. Buildings tended to be diminutive because of the high cost of freight. The lack of timber and the cost of freight meant that the available stone was used as much as possible. Stone was used for walls, seats, benches and counter tops.⁸

Opposite the town and at the mouth of the gorge were terraces worked for gold. Thirty claims were working, some with very good returns, Kelly and party, for example returned £400 per man for six weeks' work.⁹ Hamel quotes the first warden's report from the Nevis gold field in 1865: 'the Nevis is so isolated and remote from every centre of population that it is just beginning to be discovered. This cold, sequestered, and ice-bound region, hemmed in on all sides except where it opens to the Kawarau will probably never attract a very large population. It will be storehouse of wealth to the hardy adventurers who are prepared to brave its inclement climate.'¹⁰

The first gold workings in the valley were paddocking and cradling close to the Nevis River. Sluicing had begun by 1864. The population reached a peak of around 600 people in 1866, declining afterwards, with only 15-20 families becoming settled residents of the valley.¹¹ Sluicing involved the use of running

⁶ *Otago Witness*, 28 Nov 1862, p.3.; J.H.M. Salmon, *A History of Gold-mining in New Zealand*, Government Printer, Wellington, 1963, p.83.

⁷ Salmon, p.84.

⁸ *Otago Witness*, 28 Nov 1862, p.3.

⁹ *Otago Witness*, 28 Nov 1862, p.3.

¹⁰ Hamel, citing AJHR 1865 4a, p.2.

¹¹ Hamel, 1994, p.8.

water to break down gold-bearing earth. The gold was recovered in a sluice box (along open-ended wooden structure with riffles running across it covered with coarse matting. Mining spoil was washed through the box and the heavy gold stuck in the matting. Early sluicing involved diversion of water from riverbeds (with associated tunneling, cuttings or wing dams to divert the stream. Mining on higher terraces saw water from higher elevations directed at the face of the excavation to separate gold from soil and rocks.¹² As a result, the gold workings soon began changing the landscape of the valley.

The 1866 mining surveyor John Drummond reported on the population and activities going on in the Nevis. 243 people were engaged in sluicing, with a further 17 involved in ground sluicing. Thirteen people were involved in storekeeping, five in keeping public houses, three in packing (that is carting goods), and 28 in other employment. He further stated that there were 130 sluice boxes in use, 5 waterwheels, 30 pumps, and water races totalling 87 miles at this time.¹³

Hydraulic sluicing was a technology in use at this time. This technique uses water at high pressure directed through nozzles to break down banks of earth. Water was brought to the claim, often from some distance, to a point above the workings. It is piped down to the nozzles, with the fall providing the water pressure.¹⁴ Hydraulic sluicing, in common with other mining methods, forms an integrated system of workings.

In the Nevis a large number of Chinese miners (around 300) were established by 1869. There were more Chinese miners than Europeans on the Nevis field during some periods, and their settlement was described as a 'Camp'.¹⁵ In 1868 the Otago Witness reported: 'The number of Chinese...at the Nevis is very considerable and has led to the formation of a Chinese camp. Several stores, a couple of butchers' shops and a blacksmith's forge have been started...supplying John.'¹⁶ The community seems to have centred on Nevis Crossing.¹⁷ The

¹² <http://www.egold.net.au/biogs/EG00009b.htm> accessed 9 Mar 2009.

¹³ Goldfields Department report to the Provincial Government, Mining Surveyor John Drummond to Vincent Pyke. Return shewing Total Population and their various pursuits on the Otago Gold Fields, 30 September 1866, p.41a.

¹⁴ <http://www.egold.net.au/objects/DEG000024.htm> accessed 9 Mar 2009.

¹⁵ Salmon, p.113.

¹⁶ James Ng, *Windows on a Chinese Past, Volume 1*, Otago Heritage Books, Dunedin, 1993, p.158.; The Warden's Report in 1870 put the number of Chinese miners at 200 to 70 Europeans *Otago Witness*, 5 Feb 1870, p.9.

population remained steady through the 1870s, but declined in the 1880s, dropping to around 50 in 1880, and less than half that in the early 1890s.



Figure 2: The Reverend George Hunter McNeur (centre) standing outside a stone hut in the Nevis Valley with two Chinese men, probably goldminers. Photograph taken circa 1900, by an unidentified photographer (Alexander Turnbull Library, Reference number: 1/2-019151-F0).

Mining prospered in the 1870s, with workings most likely along the river flats and adjacent terraces, as well as around gold bearing tributaries.¹⁸ Nevis miners were noted for their 'conservative' use of technology: mining expert Professor Black could not convince the Nevis miners of the importance of elevation (that is the relationship between pressure at the sluicing nozzle relative to the head and volume of water used). This lack of understanding is reflected in races at Commissioners Creek which have inadequate head.¹⁹

¹⁷ James Ng, *Windows on a Chinese Past, Volume 1*, Otago Heritage Books, Dunedin, 1993, p.220, fn 122.; Parcell 1976, p.149.; *Otago Witness*, 18 Oct 1867, p.9.

¹⁸ Hamel, 1994, p.9.

¹⁹ Hamel, 1994, p.9.

A topographical survey shows the general layout of the Lower Nevis and Nevis Crossing in 1881.²⁰ The road to Cromwell descends the Carrick Range on the east, reaching the cluster of huts, the hotel and houses at Nevis Crossing. The Nevis River is bridged there; with two bridge reserves surveyed (the more southern one has a bridge across the river). Here the track branches, to the north, the bridle track to Gibbston heads north and the Nevis Road continues south. On the west of the Nevis River the road passes an isolated hut and the 'Old Homestead' at Ben Nevis Station. On the slopes of the Hector Mountains there are workings and huts at the headwaters of a stream. Travelling south there is a cemetery on the east of the road, a cluster of huts and houses and then the small town at Lower Nevis. Two water races run alongside Commissioners Creek.

Returns declined in the 1880s. Towards the end of the century hydraulic elevating and dredging marked the resurgence of mining. Hydraulic elevating involved the additional raising of the gravels from a low level, to a higher level using water under high pressure. The hydraulic elevator piped water via a delivery pipe into the pit where the gravel and water from sluicing had collected. This slurry was sucked into the pipe and pushed upwards by the high pressure water. The slurry was raised, often above ground level to sluicing boxes, where the tailings could be disposed of. Tail races were often constructed to dispose of the debris. By the 1890s these elevators were raising material up to 150 feet (in stages) or up to 90 ft in a single lift.²¹

Hydraulic elevating began in the 1890s and continued for the next fifty years around the township. New water sources were brought in to provide the additional water required for elevating. Several groups, including the Adies had elevators working by 1892. The Adie family was involved in sluicing in the Lower Nevis for fifty years. While coal had been mined in the Lower Nevis as far back as 1863, it was with the dredging boom that the coal attained its true significance, supplying the dredges at an economical rate allowing almost continual working.²²

Dredging occurred alongside hydraulic elevating. In Otago the first indication of the dredging boom was the pegging off of claims along the major (and many of the smaller) rivers and streams of Central Otago in 1889. The first dredges were

²⁰ SO 1255, Land Information New Zealand.

²¹ A useful summary of gold mining technologies is found at <http://www.uniquelynz.com/nzgold.htm> accessed 9 Mar 2009.

²² *Otago Witness*, 14 Jan 1897, p.18..

operating in the Nevis by 1897, and while they had the advantage of cheap readily available coal, the remoteness of the valley and the associated expensive transport did limit dredging operations.²³ Six dredges were still operating in 1902. But by the end of World War One dredging had declined in Otago generally, and this trend was reflected in the Nevis. Dredging continued in the Nevis into the 1940s, and with few dredges surviving the 1920s, this made the Nevis remarkable in its continuity of mining.²⁴

The people living in the Nevis Valley were dependent on the road for their communications with the outside world. The harsh conditions meant that they could be cut off. In August 1903 after an unexpectedly fast thaw a build up of foot thick ice that joined the flow of the Nevis River carried away 'the foot and pack bridge' over the river at Nevis Crossing. This meant that there was no means of crossing the river, a particular risk during the high waters of the spring thaw. There was no boat or chair which could provide a means of crossing, and foot and even wheeled traffic was considered risky at that time of year.²⁵ By 1904 a 'sheep bridge' was the only means of crossing the Nevis, and this had to be removed to allow the rock on which it was built to be blasted away to form piers for a new bridge. This left pedestrians 'after crossing the Nevis Range, to have to wade through the cold waters of the Nevis almost up to the waist.'²⁶

In such an isolated community communication was vital. Hamel notes that the strength of the community ties was such that by 1900 nearly every house was connected by a party-line telephone system. Old house sites are marked by lone telephone poles, and the line over Duffers Saddle constructed in 1902 is visible in places.²⁷

By the beginning of the twentieth century the government had embarked on a series of land reforms, encouraging the break-up of large runs, and encouraging smallholding. Gold mining communities such as the Nevis were quick to take up these opportunities. Leaseholders were generally able to freehold their land by 1912. Gold mining historian John Salmon notes that William Adie at the Nevis was one pioneer gold miner who took up land and became a 'prosperous

²³ *Otago Witness*, 14 Jan 1897, p.18.

²⁴ Hamel, 1994, p.13.; T.J. Hearn and R.P. Hargreaves, *The Speculators' Dream: Gold Dredging in Southern New Zealand*, Allied Press, Dunedin, 1985, p.55.

²⁵ *Otago Witness*, 19 Aug 1903, p.35.

²⁶ *Otago Witness*, 22 Jun 1904, p.35.

²⁷ Hamel, 1994, p.11.

smallholder.²⁸ The vast Kawarau Run (which took up much of the Nevis basin) was subdivided in 1909 and the smaller leases sold.²⁹ In the Nevis basin small sections (78-95 acres) were surveyed off on the east side of the Nevis River alongside Robertson's Road, with William Robertson himself noted as an owner on the survey plan.³⁰ The Craigroy Run was carved off the Kawarau Run at the same time.

Mining declined in the 1920s. One bright hope was the Upper Nevis Gold Dredging Company formed in 1926, managed by Sidney Charles Fache. With a declining population and the school and store struggling, this venture seemed like a panacea. It was a failure. Gavine McLean writes that the collapse 'spelt disaster to the small community, of the dredge settlement, and the lower township.'³¹

Mining did continue into the 1930s. Sidney Charles Fache ran the Nevis Crossing Dredge up until his death around 1939.³² In addition the Depression facilitated a revival of mining, with other groups joining the established miners, working over earlier tailings. The Unemployment Board set up a camp in the Nevis for unemployed men, and parties continued to work the Nevis throughout the 1930s.³³ Six or eight camps for men were set up in Otago, one of these being the Lower Nevis. Hamel considers that these twentieth century sites have 'considerable historic value', showing the 'continuity of tradition of mining life.'³⁴

Small scale mining ran on into the 1950s close to Nevis township: F. McLean, for example was still running the elevator near Cline's cottage at the close of the 1940s and another McLean family member was sluicing in the 'badlands' area into the mid 1950s. Hamel write that there is 'a strong continuity of workings at the township for sixty years from 1891 to the 1950s.'³⁵

The continuity in the use of the Lower Nevis continues into the twenty first century. Families with links back to the miners of the 1860s continue to visit the

²⁸ Salmon, p.211.

²⁹ Salmon, p.211.

³⁰ SO 5969.

³¹ Gavine McLean 'Dredging', 8(9).

³² SO 5989 (Land Information New Zealand) shows his 1936 application.

³³ Hamel, 1994, p.11.

³⁴ Hamel, 2001, pp.182-183.

³⁵ Hamel, 1994, p.21.

valley, staying in miner's cottages, bringing with them visitors who get to experience the isolation and history of the area.³⁶

³⁶ <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/water/freshwater/water-conservation/kawarau/2008submissions/ks173-lex-mclean.pdf> Submission of Lex McLean, Kawarau River Water Conservation Order, 3 Oct 2008, Accessed 6 Mar 2009.

3. Historic heritage in the Nevis Valley

3.1 Overview

There is an extremely rich and diverse range of historic places in the Nevis Valley. There are over 50 recorded archaeological sites in the Ben Nevis lease, and another 25 recorded sites at Craigroy (Figures 3, 4 and 5). The Central Otago Operative District Plan (2008) also includes four heritage sites. It should be noted that neither lease has been the subject of systematic archaeological survey, and unrecorded sites are known to be present. In addition, the maps (Figures 3 and 4) show a point-based location for sites only and do not show the extent of the sites. Some extend over large areas.

The following description highlights the main settlements and the remains of the technology used for gold mining. In addition to the historic heritage described below, there are also Maori stone source sites, surveyor's trigs, bullock and pack tracks, coal mines, telegraph lines, and habitation sites from sod walled structures to wood, brick and corrugated iron buildings and numerous artefacts from gold mining and pastoral activities still present in the landscape.

The individual places are often components of a wider group or system, for example, hut sites, outbuildings, stone walls and exotic trees, or water races, sluice faces and tailings. Gold mining sites especially are not discrete patches of disturbed ground, but integrated working systems, usually created by small groups of men. These groups ranged from simple partnerships to registered companies employing dozens of people. Linked to them is an infrastructure of store men, packers, government officials, road makers, pub keepers and others, who leave lesser traces of their activities on the landscape³⁷.

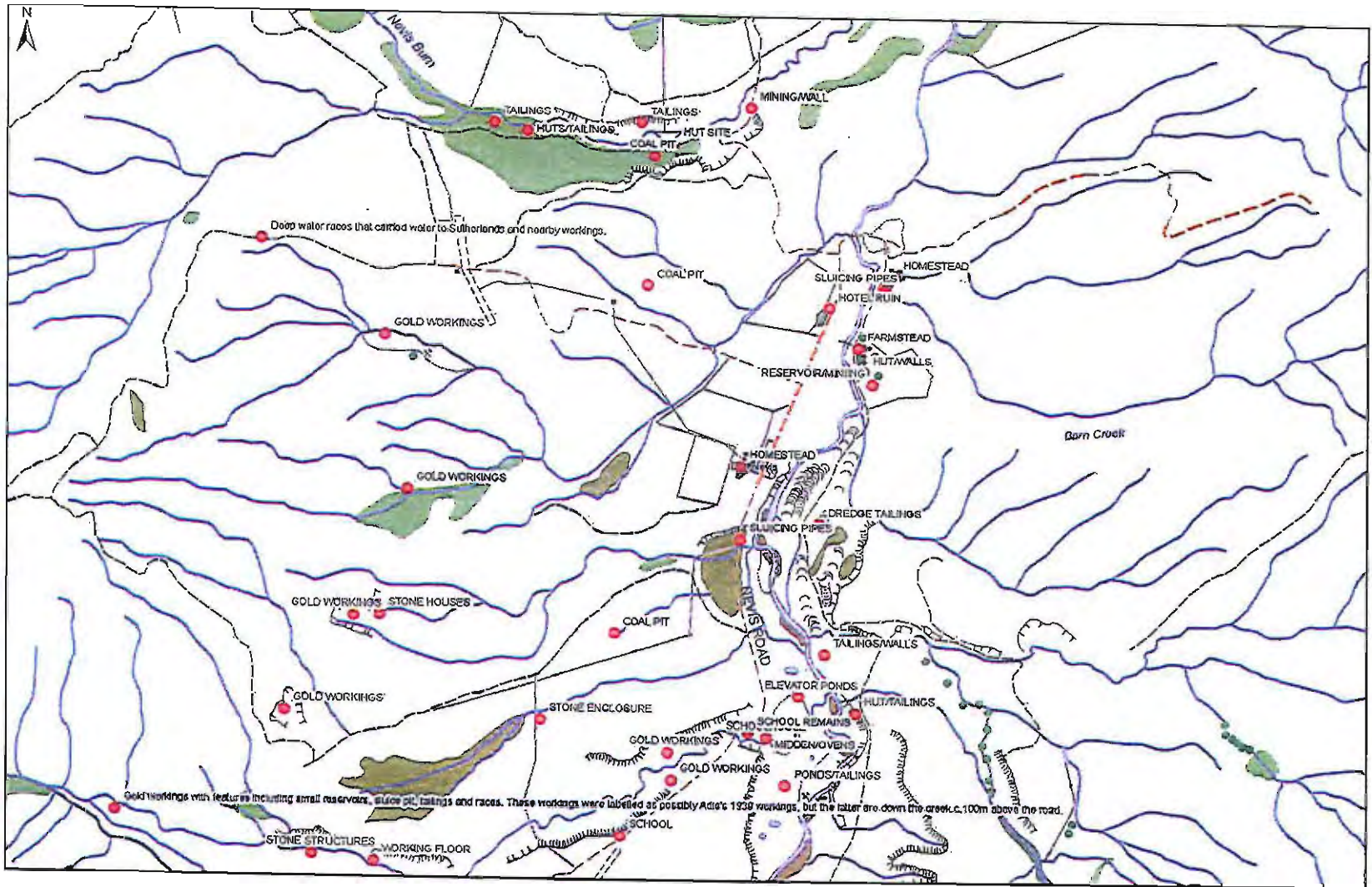
3.2 Maori sites

The two recorded Maori archaeological sites show that Maori butchered moa in the vicinity of Schoolhouse Creek, with remains of a camp site and moa butchering site nearby dating from around the fourteenth century.³⁸

³⁷ Hamel, J. 2001. The archaeology of Otago. Department of Conservation, Wellington. p. 135.

³⁸ Jill Hamel, 'The cold sequestered Nevis.' Report to the Department of Conservation as part of a series on historical values of pastoral leases in the Central Otago high country. September 1994, p.5.

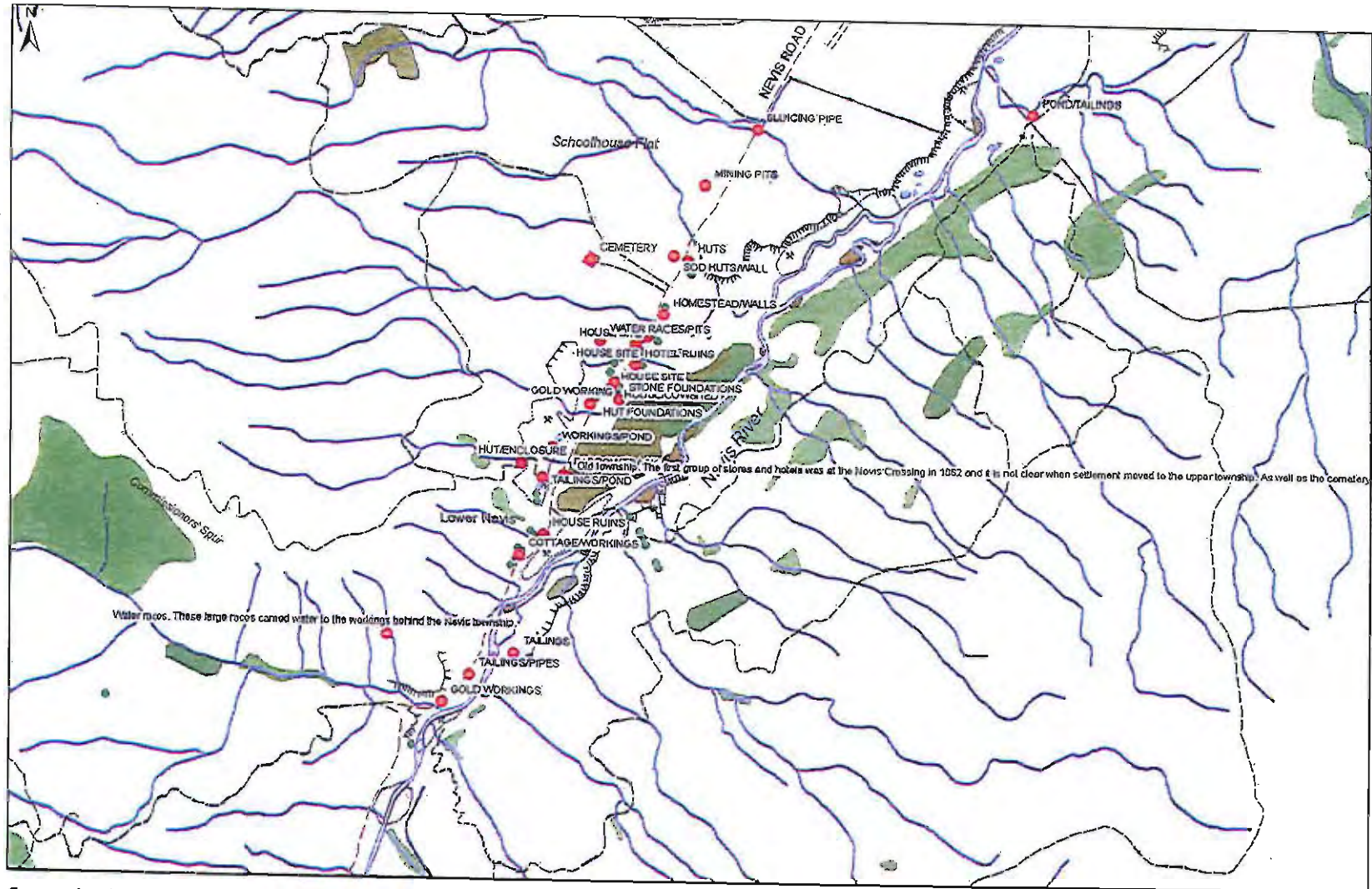
Figure 3: Archaeological sites recorded around Nevvis Crossing and Schoollhouse Creek.



Source of archaeological site data: New Zealand Archaeological Association Upgrade Project Information Management System.
 Topographical data sourced from Topographic Map 260 Series. Crown Copyright Reserved.



Figure 4: Recorded archaeological sites around Lower Nevis.



Source of archaeological site data: New Zealand Archaeological Association Upgrade Project Information Management System.
Topographical data sourced from Topographic Map 260 Series, Crown Copyright Reserved.

0 1.25 Kilometers



Figure 5: View of the lower Nevis Valley, Nevis Crossing in the foreground (FGNZ Application to vary the Water Conservation (Kawarau) Order 1997 in respect of the Nevis River). There are Chinese workings in the foreground on either side of the central road, tailings, sluice faces, water races and reservoir (all low level ground sluicing). Richie's homestead is situated in the first group of trees on the left, the second group is Craigroy homestead and the flats beyond which were dredged in the 20th century. The terraces on the left of the river bounding the dredging relate to 19th century sluicing (partially destroyed by later dredging). On the far right hills are 19th century and early 20th century sluicing. Ben Nevis homestead can be seen on the right of the river in the second group of trees, the first group marks the site of the Nevis Hotel crossing, now the location of yards made from dredge remains.

3.3 Nevis Crossing

The settlement at Nevis Crossing was located on both banks of the Nevis River. The stone remains of the Nevis Crossing Hotel are on the west bank of the River. The ruins known locally as Ritchie's homestead (after its occupant in the early years of the twentieth century) are on the east of the Nevis River. This group of buildings and associated features date to the 19th century, and may include the remains of another 1860s hotel. (Figure 6). The ruins are extensive and seem to

indicate a complex of buildings with a variety of functions. The stone work is highly unusual, with complex construction involving long schist blocks tied in with small schist laid perpendicular and through the walls. It is used not only in the group of buildings but also for walls and retaining structures.



Figure 6: Remains of buildings at Ritchie's homestead, Nevis Crossing.

3.4 Nevis Township

Nevis Township (Lower Nevis) was spread over a two kilometre stretch of the Nevis Road. Relatively few intact buildings remain. The most prominent are Masters' Homestead (c. 1870, still standing), two still occupied houses (Cline and Adie family cottages). The foundations and buildings of around a dozen structures are visible. These include the stone ruins of the Nevis Hotel and Jimmy Stewart's house, and the cobble and stone wall foundations of some seven other structures. There are two modern cribs.

The sites of occupation are marked by foundations and plantings (willows, rowans, poplar and ash), though some have been destroyed by regular ploughing, and dredging did destroy some town sites, such as that of another hotel.³⁹

3.5 Upper Schoolhouse Creek

Aside from the ground sluicing and hydraulic sluicing remains at Schoolhouse Creek there are other remains associated with settlement. There is a pack track and the remains of an early school building.

At the mouth of Schoolhouse Creek and south there are sod hut remains, and house sites on Schoolhouse Flat. Schoolhouse Flat was the site of the 'grandstand' (marked on the 1881 survey) which was the site of race meetings and social events.

3.6 Ground sluicing

Workings which are likely to date from the 1860s-1880s period are located along the edges of the higher terraces of the Nevis River (at the Craigroy side, and at Schoolhouse Flat), on the banks of Schoolhouse Creek and probably those on Scotchman's Creek. Ground sluicing (where small head races were constructed to pick up water from streams and direct it by a canvas hose at river terraces) remains typically are made up of a mining system which shows dams or reservoirs, head races, low sluice faces, tailings and tail races.

3.7 Hydraulic elevating and hydraulic sluicing

The mining remains associated with hydraulic sluicing (where the hydraulic nozzle fired water under pressure from a reservoir above the claim) and hydraulic elevating (the key component of which was a vertical pipe with a U-bend at the bottom lying in a pool of water and gold bearing gravel, washed to it along the floor of a sluice pit by a system of pipes; water and gravel was delivered out the top of the pipe into sorting trays where the gold was caught and the gravel washed into a creek or tail race) tend to be more dramatic.

The paraphernalia of pipes, nozzles and other items, steep high sluicing faces, high reservoirs, the sluicing pits and the great 'high races' built to bring in water

³⁹ Hamel, 1994, p.21.

to provide enough head to support elevation, are typical remains.⁴⁰ One such race is Robertson's eleven kilometre long High Race from Coal Creek (dating from 1893), and the races on Commissioners Creek and the Nevis Burn. There are also associated dams and reservoirs. Sluice faces, like those behind the Nevis township are also representative of the kind of workings associated with hydraulic elevating, and these Hamel identifies as a 'notable site' where 'hydraulic sluicing was used to good effect.'⁴¹

Workings at Scotchman's Creek show sluicing remains lying below the level of two big races coming out of the Nevis Burn. Workings run almost continuously around this part of the valley to Schoolhouse Creek. There is also an associated pack track which is probably linked to Mailbox Creek workings in south.

Workings at Mailbox Creek are made up of a complex of workings associated with a number of claims of a number of periods: Johnston's, Sutherland/Murrell's, and the workings associated with the 'unemployed' from the 1930s. At least two large races run south out of the Nevis Burn for about six kilometres to the workings at head of Mailbox Creek. These are joined by a third race before they reach the workings. The lower race runs into a large reservoir.

Three major sets of sluice faces are spread on the hillside for about 1500m. These sluice faces are likely to have been formed in the 1930s. A northern square sluice pit with tidy tailings was probably working by the unemployed in the 1930s. The subsidised miners occupied at least three separate small huts marked by an oak tree and willows. The sluice faces are worked into a steep hillside, with associated tail races, and a group of house sites associated with the sluicings are marked by trees. The unemployed are marked by three small foundations set in a line. Sutherland's workings consists of three reasonably definable houses and complexes with signs of other huts or outbuildings marked by stone piles.

3.8 Dredging

Dredges operated on the valley floor running the whole length of the river bed. Dredges working on rivers left T-shaped moorings in gravel banks, changes in river bed sediment, and sometimes side channels. Parts of the dredges themselves also remain, including buckets and tumblers. Paddock dredges left

⁴⁰ Hamel, 2001, p.144.

⁴¹ Hamel, 2001, p.149.

tailings and ponds.⁴² Hamel considers that dredge ponds and associated tailings beside many Otago rivers 'have been poorly described or are unknown.' She considers that archaeologically, 'dredging is the most poorly represented of all the major gold mining technologies in Otago.' This huge industry is represented by only a few remains.⁴³

In the Lower Nevis dredge tailings run the whole length of the river bed and associated dredge ponds dot the river flat. There are remnants of the dredges themselves at a number of points on the valley floor and collections of artefacts, such as dredge buckets, are found at various locations, one of the more significant being the timbers of the Nevis Crossing dredge, run by the Lower Nevis Dredge Company from 1906 until 1940, which had the longest working life in Otago and Southland and probably New Zealand.⁴⁴

⁴² Hamel, 2001, pp.157-158.

⁴³ Hamel, 2001, p.163.

⁴⁴ Hall Jones, p.80.; Hamel, 2001, p.162.

4. Assessment of heritage values

4.1 Assessing heritage values

The NZHPT has carried out its assessment of heritage significance of the Ben Nevis and Craigroy Pastoral Leases with reference to the criteria contained in the Historic Places Act 1993. These criteria form part of the government's policy on the management of historic heritage (2004) and represent current best practice for the identification and assessment of historic heritage. It should be noted that the methodology adopted in the survey of the Lower Nevis in 2005⁴⁵ is not consistent with this approach and the finding that many of the values are replicated elsewhere is not supported by the NZHPT.

4.2 Statement of heritage significance

The stark barren landscape of the Nevis Valley is a dramatic setting which provides an essential context for the history of human occupation in the valley. The Maori, pastoralists, miners and others who lived here lived in a climate of extremes which is reflected in the landscape. This is an isolated undeveloped place, with the feeling much as it was in earlier times. This visual context makes it possible to step back in time and imagine life for the earlier occupants of this at times harsh and isolated place. The landscape of the Nevis Valley, relatively unmodified by modern developments, possesses a special aesthetic significance.

The Nevis Valley, while physically isolated and set apart, is also intimately connected to external forces. Otago was one of a series of places where the human 'tsunami' of gold rush immigrants crashed ashore⁴⁶. Stories associated with this movement of people are of international and national significance⁴⁷. The historic sites of the Nevis Valley are testament to the gold rush phenomenon, of people driven to migrate across the world in search of wealth, enduring hardship and deprivation in pursuit of their goals. Archaeological remains evoke life on the frontier, in communities often dominated by single men. The Chinese

⁴⁵ Middleton, A. 2005. *Archaeological Sites in the Lower Nevis Valley: A Report Prepared for Pioneer Generation Ltd.*

⁴⁶ Nightingale, T, quoting James Belich (1996: p. 346). In Nightingale, T. 2006. A national interpretation scheme for conservation management of historic goldrush sites. Science for Conservation 262. Department of Conservation, Wellington.

⁴⁷ Nightingale, T. *ibid.* p. 21.

migration to New Zealand which began in 1865 is one of the stories of the Nevis Valley; with the Chinese once dominating the valley population.

The Lower Nevis Valley's colourful history is reflected in a myriad of diggings, sluicings, sluice faces, dredge tailings and remains, water races, exploration pits, discarded mining equipment and building ruins, inter-leaved with the pastoral farmscape and farm buildings. Water was the mover and shaker of historic activity in the valley. Its power was harnessed both by the sheer hard labour of building kilometres of race and by using the latest technology of penstock and generator. The mining remains date from early ground sluicing undertaken in the 1860s through to dredging that continued until the 1950s. In between were hydraulic elevating, hydraulic sluicing and coal mining. These features represent mining systems; interconnected and interrelated technologies which can be read in the landscape (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Network of water races and workings in snow, Lower Nevis Valley (Kevin L. Jones/ Department of Conservation, <http://www.nzarchaeology.org/aerial/11.jpg>)

The gold mining remains are particularly notable for their integrity and comprehensive representation of gold mining technology and associated sites across a considerable time span. They possess the potential from archaeological studies to inform our understanding of technological change and innovation and give insights into industrial development, social relations and past way of life. The Nevis Valley gold fields have been described as the most intact gold fields landscape in Otago, for both New Zealanders and visitors to enjoy, and a gold field site of national importance⁴⁸.

Adjacent to the Ben Nevis and Craigroy Pastoral Leases is the Nevis River itself. The waters of the Nevis are an integral part of the landscape. The river's presence was critical to alluvial gold mining activity, both in terms of bearing the gold source and enabling the use of mining technology, for pastoralism and as a resource for Maori travelling through the valley to and from Southland and Central Otago. The heritage places, surroundings, river, road and valley comprise a heritage landscape of outstanding significance. The historic value and scarcity of relict gold mining landscapes, in particular, has been explicitly recognised by land managers since the 1970s⁴⁹.

The Lower Nevis Valley was once home to a scattered community of pastoralists, miners and their families. The social activities and networks are reflected in the stories and sites in the Lower Nevis which provide insight into the community. Places such as the sporting venue, and the remains of the hotels and schools tell stories of an isolated community which social events were the glue that held them together. Understanding the social connections still evident in the landscape in this isolated place provides significant insight into life in this harsh environment. The valley has contemporary social values too, for the descendants of those people who once lived there and those families whom still maintain close ties to the place.

From a visitor experience perspective, the wide open landscape and lack of forest and shrub land make sites highly visible and particularly easy for visitors to appreciate. The fortunate fact that water runs downhill enables the inquisitive visitor to follow the linkages from race to reservoir or power house to workings, and to understand the evolution of use of water power. Although an area such as Skippers has similar mining values, the vegetation and steep terrain makes the

⁴⁸ Hamel, J. 1994. *The Cold Sequestered Nevis*.

⁴⁹ Nightingale, T. 2006. A national interpretation scheme for conservation management of historic goldrush sites. *Science for Conservation* 262. Department of Conservation, Wellington. p. 11.

latter more difficult for visitor interpretation. The mining systems found in other parts of New Zealand, for instance the West Coast and Coromandel, are covered in forest and have suffered much more from natural erosion. They occur at lower elevations, are more topographically diffuse, and have suffered much greater modification by later developments than the Nevis. There is no other known alluvial gold field in New Zealand that has both such high heritage values and possesses such ease of interpretation (and access) as the Nevis Valley, making it a goldfield of national importance⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ Conservation Resource Reports for Ben Nevis and Craigroy Pastoral Leases, DOC Otago Conservancy.

5. Protection measures

5.1 Proposed protection measures

The NZHPT is aware that several areas identified as having significant historic heritage values and originally recommended for retention as conservation land are now proposed for freeholding to Pioneer Generation Limited (PGL). The preliminary proposal indicates that areas proposed for freeholding will be subject to conservation covenants, recognising landscape values and historic heritage.

In particular, some 45 hectares around the Ben Nevis Homestead, initially recommended for protection on biodiversity and historic heritage grounds, will instead be freeholded. The conservation covenant which applies to this area is to include a clause stating the Minister of Conservation will not unreasonably withhold consent to construction of a hydro dam and the associated impoundment of water⁵¹.

The view of the Department of Conservation in reporting on this tenure review, that the investigation of affected archaeological sites prior to inundation would address the impact on heritage values⁵² fails to take into account their contribution to the landscape and the connections between heritage places, which are also an important aspect of their collective significance.

The NZHPT has not been consulted over the significance of the heritage values as part of the tenure review process. It has however undertaken its own research and investigation to identify and understand the heritage significance of these values. The NZHPT has prepared a Registration Report for recognizing a Lower Nevis valley Historic Area. A copy of this report was sent to Land Information New Zealand in September 2009. Based on the values identified in that report, the NZHPT considers that the heritage values of the historic places, structures, sites and artefacts and their contribution to the heritage landscape are not adequately recognised in either the Ben Nevis or Craigroy proposed

⁵¹ 27 March 2008 letter from DOC (Jeff Connell, Otago Conservator) to David Paterson, QV Valuations (Tenure Review Consultant to LINZ).

⁵² 27 March 2008 letter from DOC (Jeff Connell, Otago Conservator) to David Paterson, QV Valuations (Tenure Review Consultant to LINZ).

conservation covenants (landscape) to be issued pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977.

The NZHPT further believes that the range of significant heritage values will not be sufficiently protected through the terms and provisions of the proposed protective covenants. The proposed conservation covenants (landscape) for both Ben Nevis and Craigroy do not specify protection of any heritage values in the landscape at all (refer Schedule 3 – Management Prescription).

The NZHPT is of the view that the significant heritage values identified on both pastoral leases should be protected through a heritage covenant issued pursuant to section 6 Historic Places Act 1993 (HPA). This HPA covenant would be over the areas of both the Ben Nevis and Craigroy pastoral leases, contained within the extent of the NZHPT Lower Nevis Historic Area registration. The heritage covenant should be executed between NZHPT and LINZ prior to freeholding.

5.2 NZHPT recommendations

The NZHPT recommends that:

1. Given the significant inherent values of the Proposed Lower Nevis Historic Area, the NZHPT submits that the land should be restored to and retained in Crown control as conservation land. In time, the area of these leases could then form the link joining both the Remarkables and Kopuwai Conservation Areas.
2. In the event that the full extent of the Ben Nevis and Craigroy pastoral leases are not retained in crown control as conservation land, and the areas proposed for freeholding are confirmed, there should be put in place a heritage covenant pursuant to Section 40 of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 and Section 6 of the Historic Places Act 1993, that appropriately deals with the significant heritage values on both the Ben Nevis and Craigroy pastoral leases. Protective mechanisms, as defined in the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998, include heritage covenants under the Historic Places Act 1993.
3. The extent of the heritage covenant should include those areas of both the Ben Nevis and Craigroy pastoral leases, contained within the NZHPT Lower Nevis Historic Area registration proposal. The heritage covenant should be executed between NZHPT and LINZ prior to freeholding.

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