

Before the Independent Commissioner
Appointed by the Selwyn District Council

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of a hearing on submissions to the Partially Operative Selwyn
District Plan, Variation 2: Levi Road rezoning

Foodstuffs (South Island) Properties Limited

Applicant

Statement of Evidence of Bernard John Johnston

7 March 2025

Applicant's solicitors:

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Introduction

- 1 My name is Bernard John Johnston.
- 2 I am a Registered Architect with a Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) and Bachelor of Building Science degrees from Victoria University.
- 3 I am currently self employed as a Registered Architect and have held that position since 1995.
- 4 My previous work experience relevant to this matter includes 19 years association with the Mitre 10 Group through various store development projects across the South Island and Lower North Island.
- 5 This evidence is provided in support of Foodstuffs South Island Limited and Foodstuffs (**South Island**) Properties Limited (**Foodstuffs**) request to rezone 157 Levi Road, Rolleston (**Site**) from notified Medium Density Residential Zone (**MDRZ**) subject to an outline development plan, to Large Format Retail Zone (**LFRZ**) subject to an Outline Development Plan (**ODP**) through Variation 2 to the Partially Operative Selwyn District Plan (**PODP**).
- 6 My role has been to provide architectural evidence to demonstrate how the proposed Mitre 10 building will be located on the Site, should the rezoning be successful. I have prepared preliminary plans in conjunction with the client R & H Investments Ltd (i.e. the Smith family) which has informed this evidence and the proposed ODP.
- 7 I have visited the site and I am familiar with the Site and area.
- 8 In preparing this statement of evidence I have considered the following documents:
 - (a) Statement of Evidence prepared by:
 - (i) Mark Allan (Planning);
 - (ii) David Compton-Moen (Urban Design);
 - (iii) Tony Milne (Landscape Architecture); and
 - (iv) Murray Smith (Mitre 10).
 - (b) the Section 42A Report prepared by Mr Friedel dated 28 February 2025;
 - (c) Planning provisions relevant to my area of expertise;
 - (d) Relevant submissions.

Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses

- 9 While this is not a hearing before the Environment Court, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2023 and that I have complied with it when preparing my evidence. Other than when I state I am relying on the advice of another person, this evidence is 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

- 10 I have prepared evidence in relation to:
- (a) Site requirements;
 - (b) Site Planning and Building design for a Mitre 10;
 - (c) Landscaping and other matters; and
 - (d) The proposed ODP.

Site Requirements

- 11 When considering a building and location for a Mitre 10, a number of factors need to be considered including:
- (a) Having an area large enough to contain a building including retail hall, garden centre, cafe and drive through and practical site configuration including loading facilities and a covered yard.
 - (b) Practical site configuration including sufficient secure loading/yard facilities well separated from public, room for a drive through and covered yards;
 - (c) The surrounding environmental context and providing sufficient room for setbacks and buffers and acoustic purposes, landscaping and on-site stormwater disposal;
 - (d) Road frontage onto a strategic roading network (able to accommodate customer traffic and service vehicles) for a high-profile visual perspective, and sufficient room for onsite car parking to the front of the store to provide safe access for customers and staff isolated from delivery operations; and
 - (e) The potential to co-locate with other large format retail stores (noting Mitre10 are generally not suited to a town centre like Rolleston due to size and operational requirements of trade based retail suppliers).

- 12 This Site meets the above requirements and will be able to offer an appropriate customer experience, consistent with other Mitre 10 offerings.

Site Planning

- 13 The Site planning design philosophy involves consideration of the specific site context and balances this with the functional aspects generally related to the building and the relationships within. In addition to these considerations the store must also function safely, efficiently and be economically viable.
- 14 Collaboration with the Urban Design, Landscape and Transport consultants has included the testing, development, and agreement of the most suitable site layout.
- 15 A number of arrangements were considered to determine the building location within the Site. The rectangular floor plan, noting public and servicing points of entry plays a significant part in site placement. To achieve the most efficient planning outcome, public entry must be on the front longitudinal edge with service areas to the rear longitudinal edge. This provides clear and safe separation between public and service vehicles, and must ideally be easily accessed from an adjacent road entry. When considering the PAK'nSAVE's consented location and layout on the Site (and seeking to create synergies between the two activities), the remaining size and shape of the Site, the orientation of road frontages and residential boundary interfaces, the proposed layout was a natural fit.
- 16 The building position is located toward the north east of the Site, with the service yard bounding the north east internal boundary. An 18m setback of the building here (which is the same setback as the PAK'nSAVE) takes into account the future potential for residential development on this boundary. This leaves the south west frontage open for public parking and easy navigation off the arterial frontage road – Lincoln Rolleston Road. This layout provides for:
- (a) setback and separation from both arterial roads and adjacent residential areas allowing good opportunity for effective landscape mitigation and amenity (consistent with the PAK'nSAVE);
 - (b) reduced bulk and dominance of the building;
 - (c) safe and distributed vehicle access to and from the site;
 - (d) service delivery and yard areas activity separate from primary public interface, with these operational aspects also being visually discreet and secure with solid fencing and landscape for visual and noise mitigation;
 - (e) primary public building entry adjacent to main carpark body; and
 - (f) solar orientation and opportunity for building access to daylight.

- 17 The length of façade facing Lincoln Rolleston Road ensures an appropriate sense of scale for a new Mitre 10. The decision to orient the building so as to not be parallel with the road creates larger set-backs with more landscaping opportunities reducing its visual dominance.
- 18 Overall the building form will be consistent with a standard Mitre 10 store design and configuration which is focused on retail (as opposed to trade), but it has been located and placed specifically on the Site in response to the context. In addition to functional aspects, the detailed architectural design will further consider form, scale, quality of space, land use context and internal experience.
- 19 With respect to size, the following areas are required:

	Approx. Area (m ²)
Retail Hall	4,060
Drive Through	1,895
Building Supplies	2,320
Inwards Goods	400
Inwards Goods Canopy	61
Entry Vestibule	177
Garden Centre – Covered	1,200
Garden Centre – Uncovered	800
Café	205
Mezzanine Offices	300
Total	11,418
Uncovered Yard	4,030
Concourse Apron	420

Design Considerations

- 20 The key development features of the indicative concept design for the Mitre 10 can be summarised as follows:
- 21 Provisions for approximately 200 car parking spaces.

- 22 The preferred building geometry is rectangular and approximately 58-60m wide. This shape is synonymous with the Mitre 10 brand. The simple, clean lines and distinctive colour mix of the buildings play a major role in how the Mitre 10 Group are recognised and perceived by the community. The building itself becomes the sign, however there is scope within the corporate branding framework to introduce variety through material changes and façade treatments which is proposed for this Site. This has been done with similar Mitre 10 developments in sensitive areas.
- 23 Typically, parapeted external walls to the retail hall and drive through are 11m above ground level. The entry vestibule is delineated with taller parapets, approximately 12m above ground level.
- 24 The orientation of the building on this triangular site results in more open spaces in front of the building to the north, with it set back in excess of 80m from the Lincoln Rolleston Road boundary. This setback reduces at the southern end of the building to approximately 12.3m, which still allows for a generous 6m wide landscaping strip and 6.3m wide dual carriageway.
- 25 The extent of this reduced setback is limited, relative to the overall length of the façade facing the street. A Mitre 10 building will be in the range of 190-200m in length. Of this 26m of this elevation will be within 20m of the road boundary. This can be further mitigated through appropriate facade treatment, material selection and landscaping, and will be no more visually dominant than a longer length of wall parallel with the road boundary at a greater set back.
- 26 The garden centre and associated roofs at the northern end of the building will introduce a finer degree of modulation between the main Mitre 10 retail hall and the adjoining PAK'nSAVE building. This reduction in scale helps transition between the two structures.
- 27 On the eastern side of the building, visual bulk is reduced where it adjoins land zoned for future residential development by the deliberate omission of parapets. The 10m wide biodiversity corridor and 8m wide service lane ensure that recession plane restrictions can easily be complied with and daylight protection to adjoining future properties retained. Should a parapet be provided along the eastern elevation recession planes would still be easily complied with.
- 28 The elevated parapets and extended forecourt at the entry vestibule will signify the building's main collection point.

- 29 The building requires a singular public entry into the retail hall through the entry vestibule, which is located centrally to the car park. Access to the café and garden centre is through the retail hall only.
- 30 Ideally the entry vestibule is located approximately mid-way along the retail hall and faces the main car park on the western side of the site. This concentrates the mass of the building towards the middle of the site.
- 31 The apron in front of the entry vestibule is generously proportioned allowing a variety of additional retail and community activities to activate the front of the building.
- 32 The main carpark location will be with direct access to the adjoining Lincoln Rolleston Road.
- 33 For safe operation, inwards goods vehicles will be separated from public areas and located along a service corridor on the eastern side of the site. Mitre 10 delivery trucks will enter the site at the crossing shared with the adjoining PAK'nSAVE building on Lincoln Rolleston Road. These vehicles will exit via the yard at the southern end of the site.
- 34 Both vehicular and pedestrian linkages will be planned between the proposed Mitre 10 site and the adjoining PAK'nSAVE development.

Landscaping and Other Matters

- 35 The ODP provides for comprehensive and site specific landscape provisions which, when considered with the building position and setbacks will be an appropriate response to the specific residential context.
- 36 Landscape screening will ensure the building is visually pared back, reducing any potential dominance effects, and will blend in rather than contrast to further improve the future developments amenity and compatibility with site context.
- 37 A landscaping strip will be provided along the full length of the road boundary along the Lincoln Rolleston Road in accordance with the ODP. This is to be low level and designed to eliminate hiding places.
- 38 Standard directional signage can be located at entry and exit points.
- 39 Landscaping areas will be provided internal to the carparking areas.
- 40 All car park, building perimeter and yard areas will be well lit with a combination of pole lighting and security lighting mounted on the building.

41 These matters are more fully addressed in the evidence of Mr Milne.

Outline Development plan

42 I have considered all of the necessary site requirements and building design requirements above and I can confirm that the site is suitable for a future Mitre 10 building.

43 When considering anticipated built form, necessary operational and functional matters and plan requirements (including those proposed as part of the rezoning such as landscaping) I consider a proposed future Mitre 10 will fit comfortably within the indicative building footprint on the proposed Outline Development Plan, will provide certainty of future development and will be visually compatible with its surroundings.

Bernard John Johnston