

**Before an Independent Hearing
Commissioner Appointed by
Selwyn District Council**

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER a Resource Consent Application for
land use consent to erect and operate a
supermarket at 157 Levi Road,
Rolleston by Foodstuffs (South Island)
Properties Limited (RC216016)

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF Gabriel Wilson Ross

Landscape Architect

3 August 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. My name is Gabriel Wilson Ross.
2. I provided a peer review of the applicants proposed landscape plan and accompanying landscape and visual effects assessment (LEA) along with the public submissions and addressed them as part of my primary evidence where they related to landscape and visual effect matters.
3. Following this, I have reviewed the applicant's statement of evidence with updated landscape design plan and supporting graphic attachments along with the two late submissions.
4. I was contacted by Mr Tony Milne, the applicants Landscape Architect on the 26th July asking to discuss the updated landscape plans and any remaining concerns in regards to the landscape and visual amenity of the proposal.
5. I confirmed on 27th July that the majority of the concerns raised in the initial peer review and my subsequent primary evidence had now been addressed with the exception of several minor issues.
6. Following this, Mr Milne has provided an updated landscape plan (dated 2nd August 2022), visualisations and a table of projected tree growth rates and heights.
7. From an overall landscape and visual effects assessment perspective, the main concerns outlined in the Landscape and Visual Impacts peer review and my primary evidence have now been satisfactorily addressed with only two minor issues that can be resolved via suitable conditions of consent.

KEY FINDINGS WITHIN EVIDENCE

8. The Pack n Save (PnS) proposal will unavoidably result in a different landscape character when compared to the anticipated residential use under the Operational or Proposed Selwyn District

- Plans. In my view, from a landscape and visual effects perspective, with the proposed landscape planting and site layout this is not an adverse outcome and the development will be comparable with the current and future residential context.
9. The proposed landscape design layers planting beds and specimen trees along both the boundary and within the internal parking areas. The proposed location of the built form provides large setbacks from the existing road frontages.
 10. Following successful establishment of the proposed trees, these will provide an effective visual filter to help reduce the apparent bulk of the built form and the scale of the parking areas.
 11. I agree with Mr Milne's statement that the mature size of the trees and numbers proposed will be substantially larger and greater than that likely under a residential development anticipated under the existing or proposed zoning.
 12. The additional detail provided in the evidence of Electrical Engineer Mr Kitto, addresses my earlier concerns around the potential for adverse lighting effects of a large commercial development within a predominantly residential context.
 13. Similarly, the agreement to reduce the size of the main pylon signs from the previous 8m height to 6m will address previous concerns of the signage being out of character and scale to the residential landscape context.
 14. Inclusion of a mix of exotic and native trees and a small plaza and walkway connection through the open space on the intersection of Levi and Rolleston-Lincoln Roads is a positive change that will help further activate this space. Based on the evidence provided by Mr Smith, the proposed intersection upgrades and eventual SDC signalisation works will require some redesign of this area.
 15. Replacement of the previous mixed native boundary planting along the Lincoln-Rolleston Road frontage with a row of exotic '*Platanus Autumn Glory*' specimen trees will provide a more suitable scale

and density of screening for the development. This also provides the framework for creating a formal avenue planting as recommended in the Rolleston Structure Plan.

16. The additional arbour over the southern pedestrian access and extra trees on the north side of the stormwater basin will positively assist in providing screening of the southern part of the parking lot that was previously relatively visible from viewpoints along the Rolleston-Lincoln Road corridor.
17. Mr Milne has confirmed in his summary of evidence that operational requirements related to truck movements prevent placement of trees within the last planting bed in the adjacent parking area.
18. Mirroring the planter bed along the northern façade of the building to the east side of the Click and Collect canopy provides some localised visual softening on the buildings interface with the ground plane.
19. I agree that together with the setback of the main built form, the proposed landscape design, when successfully established, will provide effective mitigation of the landscape and visual effects of the development. I agree that the proposal will contribute positivity to the landscape amenity values of the development and overall will be compatible with the existing and future residential context
20. Generally, I am in agreement with Mr Milne's LEA findings that the proposal will result in no more than *Low* or *Low to Moderate* adverse effects initially and I would expect that these effects will trend towards *Low to Very Low* as the mitigation planting successfully establishes.

Outstanding Matters

21. Based on the latest updated landscape plan provided by Mr Milne dated 2nd August 2022 there are only two remaining minor matters to address.

22. The introduction of the *Pittosporum eugenoides* (Tarata) into the 10m wide eastern boundary planting is a positive change that will provide additional fast growing evergreen trees with relatively dense foliage. This will shorten the time before the planting will provide effective filtering of views of the built form from viewpoints on the adjacent land. I agree that the visualisations provided by Mr Milne depict a realistic illustration of this.
23. Given the high likelihood of the adjacent land being rezoned to residential under Plan Change 71 proposal, I however recommend this planting density is increased to achieve a more continuous canopy coverage to further increase the level of visual filtering of views to the proposed building.
24. I also recommend the Applicant prioritises planting this boundary as soon as practical in the first planting season following site earthworks to achieve as much growth as possible before the adjacent land is developed.
25. The remaining outstanding matter is more functional in nature and involves clarification of planting details and minimum available soil volumes for trees and vines set within the hardscape areas of the parking lot. This is necessary to ensure a satisfactory long-term level of growth and plant health and achieving the associated desired visual effects mitigation.
26. This is a critical element that is often, in my experience, where large format commercial landscape schemes fail. Tree planted with inadequate provision for soil, water and gas exchange in harsh urban environments can result in stunted growth, decline and often death of trees in the first 5-10 years after planting.
27. I have recommended some minimum soil volumes as a condition of consent with 50 cubic meters for large trees. Mr Milne has proposed this is reduced to 40 cubic meters which is considered acceptable provided this is an uncompacted available soil volume – i.e. the volume of soil excluding aggregate should a structural soil mix be used.

28. Given the positive dialogue with Mr Milne to date, I am confident that both these items can be resolved as a condition of consent requiring the final planting plans, details and specifications to be submitted for review and approval by SDC prior to construction.

Conclusion

29. With improvements made to the scheme and the proposed conditions, the potential adverse landscape and visual effects have been reduced to an appropriate level.
30. I agree that the proposed developments landscape and visual character will be compatible within the existing and evolving future residential landscape context.

Gabriel Wilson Ross

Landscape Architect

Boffa Miskell Limited

3 August 2022