

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of an application for resource consent by Woolworths New Zealand Limited for the construction and operation of a supermarket and associated activities at 58 Great South Road, Pokeno

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF GRAEME SCOTT  
ON BEHALF OF WOOLWORTHS NEW ZEALAND LIMITED**

**URBAN DESIGN**

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 Woolworths New Zealand Limited ("**Woolworths**") seeks resource consent for the construction and operation of a supermarket ("**Proposal**") at 58 Great South Road, Pokeno ("**Site**").

1.2 In this evidence, I discuss the required measures set out in the Waikato District Plan ("**District Plan**") to achieve a good urban design for the Pokeno town centre, and how a large supermarket operation might occupy the Site. While the District Plan anticipates a traditional approach to town centre development, with buildings at the street boundary, these measures cannot all be met by the Proposal.

1.3 Notwithstanding, my conclusion is that I consider the Proposal represents a good balance between the urban design requirements of the District Plan and the benefits to the community of having a supermarket in the town centre. In particular, I consider that the proposal for a strong green edge to the Great South Road frontage, strengthened by the vertical landmarks of the canopy is a good solution for the Site from an urban design perspective.

1.4 The Council Officer and urban design expert also agree that the Proposal is acceptable from an urban design perspective.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 My name is Graeme Clement Scott and I hold the position of urban design consultant at ASC Architects Limited in Auckland. I have held this position since 2017 and prior to that, I held the position of director of that practice for 36 years.
- 2.2 I am a registered architect with 40 years' professional experience. I have an Honours degree in Architecture from the University of Auckland. I am a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Architects Inc and have been awarded the NZIA President's Award four times. I have been an active member and chair of the NZIA Auckland Branch Urban Issues Group and the Urban Design Forum during the last 20 years. I am currently the deputy-convener of Auckland Council's urban design panels.
- 2.3 In terms of my involvement in the Proposal, I prepared the Urban Design Assessment that accompanied the resource consent application. I also attended meetings with the Council, and its consultants to develop the design of the Proposal.

### **Code of conduct**

- 2.4 I confirm that I have read the Expert Witness Code of Conduct set out in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2014. I have complied with the Code of Conduct in preparing this evidence and will continue to comply with it while giving oral evidence at the hearing. Except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person, this written 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 expressed in this evidence.

## **3. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- 3.1 My evidence will:
- (a) discuss the character of Pokeno and provide a description of the Site;
  - (b) explain the design of the Proposal from an urban design perspective;

- (c) outline the relevant design assessment criteria from the District Plan and assess the Proposal against the criteria;
- (d) respond to relevant submissions received and to the Council officer's Pre-hearing Report; and
- (e) provide overall conclusions regarding the Proposal.

#### **4. CONTEXT**

##### **Pokeno's character**

- 4.1 Pokeno's location in the Northern end of the Waikato valley and at the base of the Bombay Hills, has meant that it has played a significant part in the history of the area.
- 4.2 As outlined in my Urban Design Assessment, as a result of a dispersed settlement pattern in the area by both Maori and Pakeha, the physical presence of Pokeno has always had a somewhat temporary character, and little in the way of an urban fabric has been generated in spite of a long history.
- 4.3 The Site is at a key location for the future of Pokeno, and its growing town centre. The residential growth of Pokeno is likely to continue, and concentrating the provision of goods and services in the existing centre is important to the future vitality of the town. As a result of the projected growth, the town centre is likely to see significant changes over the next few years.

##### **Site description**

- 4.4 The Site is in the block south of the old Post Office Building, on the other (north-eastern) side of Great South Road. It is currently farmland, with an unformed frontage of some 60 metres to Great South Road. There are no significant trees or other natural features on the Site.
- 4.5 It is directly opposite the existing main shopping block of Pokeno, which consists of older commercial buildings with street verandahs, both one and two storeys.
- 4.6 Other aspects of the Site are described in my Urban Design Assessment.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Design Assessment, dated 1 May 2019, at Section 4.

### **The Site layout and supermarket building**

- 4.7 Woolworths' operational criteria for its supermarkets influence the layout of the Site. The customer parking and supermarket entry must be highly visible from Great South Road, and the large trucks used to deliver goods must be kept separate from customer vehicle circulations for safety reasons.
- 4.8 Due to the carparking requirements, the supermarket building is located toward the rear of the Site, set back from the Great South Road frontage. However, the entry to the supermarket building is visible from the street frontage so that there is a clear pedestrian access way through the carpark.
- 4.9 As part of the Proposal, the Great South Road frontage has a landscaped plaza open to the public, which has seating and a large verandah for cover. The verandah overhangs the Site boundary and the adjacent public footpath. There is also extensive landscaping throughout the carpark, and along the new Wellington Street.
- 4.10 In terms of the supermarket building, the exterior has a full parapet to conceal the sloping roof, and the enclosing wall panels have been varied in height, colour and texture to avoid a monolithic box appearance. The front door of the supermarket will be clearly identifiable, with glazing, canopies and pedestrian access through the carpark signalling the entrance. Canopies have been used throughout to break-down the scale and to give clear signals about entrance and customer pick-up points.
- 4.11 The loading facilities are located behind the supermarket building, at the rear of the Site. Locating the back-of-house office functions on the ground floor has allowed a reduction in overall height, and the windows on the Wellington Street frontage which give further scale and texture to the overall form and assist in activating more than just the front façade.
- 4.12 I consider that these elements will result in acceptable visual outcomes from an urban design perspective.

### **Great South Road boundary**

- 4.13 The Site fronts Great South Road. In my Urban Design Assessment,<sup>2</sup> I acknowledged that the vision of the District Plan is to have retail frontage to

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<sup>2</sup> Urban Design Assessment, dated 1 May 2019, at section 9.

both sides of Great South Road. The double-sided street activated by continuous retail / hospitality uses protected by street verandahs is a common aspiration for towns and cities.

- 4.14 For operational and commercial reasons, retail frontage on the street boundary is not part of the Proposal. Notwithstanding this, Woolworths and its consultants have worked closely with the Council to design an outcome that meets, as closely as possible, the District Plan's expectations of an enclosed streetscape, overhead verandah, and some degree of verticality along the street edge.
- 4.15 Woolworths carefully considered the Council's feedback around the placemaking opportunities, and considered how to refine the design to mitigate the potential negative effect on the proposed urban environment resulting from the supermarket being set back a considerable distance from Great South Road.
- 4.16 Various design options were explored, starting with the large landscaped area on Great South Road (which remains part of the Proposal), low walls and a centralised plaza and canopy at the pedestrian crossing location.
- 4.17 The final frontage design incorporates a landscaped plaza of approximately 650m<sup>2</sup> in area. This plaza will be extensively landscaped and provide seating for the public to use. To strengthen the frontage, a canopy structure will also be constructed, which, combined with the pylon sign achieves both verticality and intermittent shelter from the weather.
- 4.18 No vehicular access is proposed direct from Great South Road so that the frontage remains continuous.

#### **The rear boundary**

- 4.19 There is an overall 8 metre fall across the Site from Great South Road to the northern corner. The rear boundary abuts the only adjacent property that is zoned Residential. Therefore, Woolworths has designed a mechanically stabilised earth ("**MSE**") wall to address the topographical difference and to establish an appropriate building platform for the Site. The MSE wall can be planted and is proposed to be screened with additional landscaped planting so

as to minimise adverse visual impact effects on the neighbouring residential property.<sup>3</sup>

- 4.20 Additionally, a line of five specimen trees are proposed for this boundary, at the end of Wellington Street, to shield the view of the supermarket from the residential property nearby.

#### **Wellington Street boundary**

- 4.21 Wellington Street will be formed to give vehicle access to the Site at two points as shown on the drawings.<sup>4</sup>
- 4.22 The north-western side of the street will be complete with a grass berm, public footpath and four street trees between parallel carparks. This will be designed to Council standards.

### **5. ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 In my Urban Design Assessment,<sup>5</sup> I have assessed, in detail, the Proposal against the Assessment Criteria set out in the District Plan Appendix 29.2. I summarise my assessment below and in the table provided in **Attachment A** to this statement of evidence.

#### **Design Element 1: Site Planning**

- 5.2 As outlined above, the Proposal does not provide a retail frontage with an attached street verandah along Great South Road, and does not provide a carpark with entry points from two side-streets. The design criteria 1 through 5 are therefore not satisfied. Criterion 7, suggesting no more than one double row of carparks between the building and the street is also not met, due to the need to aggregate all the carparking in one location, which is in front of the building.
- 5.3 To address the building' being set back from the street edge, a verandah along the Great South Road frontage has been included in the Proposal. This introduces some street enclosure and protection for pedestrians from the weather, as envisaged by the District Plan. The building entrance is highly

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<sup>3</sup> Urban Design Assessment at section 7.

<sup>4</sup> Asc Architects, Proposal for Countdown Pokeno, rev 18828, 23 April 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Urban Design Assessment at section 10.

visible from the public domain, and servicing areas are completely screened, meaning that the Proposal complies with the remaining criteria of Design Element 1.

- 5.4 The proposal to form Wellington Street and to use it as the vehicle access route to the supermarket, for both deliveries and customers, means there is no vehicle crossing required from the site on to Great South Road.

### **Design Element 2: Building form, public interface and external appearance**

- 5.5 The Proposal provides good articulation in the form of the building, good legibility of entrances and concealment of larger service entrances. In this regard, criteria 1, 2, 5 and 7 are satisfactorily met
- 5.6 Criteria 4, and 6, suggesting frontages on the street and an architecture that addresses the corner are not met, and criterion 8, suggesting only signs that are attached to a building, is similarly not met.
- 5.7 However, the Proposal goes some way toward addressing these issues with the landscape scheme. The architectural design of the canopy and the proposed pylon sign make a significant statement along the street boundary and at the corner.
- 5.8 In relation to criterion 3, while the roof is large, it is not visible from normal viewpoints and the parapet walls enclosing it have good variety in height and texture to break up the large box of the building.

### **Design Element 3: Open space, parking and landscaping**

- 5.9 The Proposal incorporates a high degree of compliance with all Design Element 3 criteria. The carpark is well-designed and legible, with safe and accessible pedestrian routes and a high quality of landscaping.

### **Design Guidelines**

- 5.10 I have considered all relevant urban design criteria and guidelines in respect of anticipated development on the Site. Specifically, in undertaking the above assessment, I made reference to Appendix 29.2 of the District Plan, as well as Appendices 16.3 and 16.8, being the Urban Design Guidelines for Town Centres (2018) and the Character Statement – Pokeno Town Centre (2018),

both prepared by Beca. I also had regard to the "Pokeno Town Centre – architectural form, materials and signage design guide" by Richard Knott Ltd, (2015).

- 5.11 While I understand the vision they present of an idealised future Pokeno town centre, the Proposal is different to this vision, yet incorporates significant measures to ensure that the urban design outcome is acceptable. These measures include the avoiding of a vehicle crossing from the site onto Great South Road, a degree of street enclosure along the block provided by vertical architectural elements at the street boundary, and a verandah to provide further street edge definition, and shelter for pedestrians.

#### **Overall conclusion**

- 5.12 In my opinion, the design of the Proposal successfully delivers many of the outcomes envisaged by the District Plan.

## **6. RESPONSE TO RELEVANT SUBMISSIONS AND THE PRE-HEARING REPORT**

### **Submissions**

- 6.1 I have read the submissions from the Pokeno Community Committee and Pokeno Bacon Company. The Community Committee's submission is in support, while the submission by Pokeno Bacon opposes the Proposal. Notwithstanding this, both submissions raise similar concerns in respect of the transport-related effects (including parking in the town centre).
- 6.2 While I understand the concerns about the character of Great South Road and existing patterns of use (both the truck movements and the existing angle parking along the Site's frontage), I consider there are other solutions available to Council that could assist in a new urban design for Pokeno. In particular, the development of the town square at the intersection of Market Street and Great South Road depicted in the report from Richard Knott appears worthy of strong community support.
- 6.3 The Pokeno Community Committee also raised concerns with the height of the proposed sign, consistency of the design with the guidelines, and the location of the pedestrian plaza. In response:

- (a) *Height* - I agree with the Council's urban design consultant, Lauren White's, conclusion that the sign is acceptable when considering that the maximum permitted building height in the town centre is 12m. I also consider that the location of the sign serves as a corner marker for the intersection of Wellington Street and Great South Road.
- (b) *Design* – the sign has similar steel detailing to provide consistent vertical elements in the landscape along the street frontage. Further, as Ms White also notes that, the colour and form is consistent with the building façade and is generally consistent with the design guidelines.
- (c) *Pedestrian plaza* – The idea of having some of the landscaped pedestrian area around the corner fronting Wellington Street and away from the heavy traffic of Great South Road has some merit. However, the decision to concentrate the public amenity being provided on the Site along Great South Road was made considering the District Plan's emphasis on the need to address that road, and the desirability of concentrating the dedicated pedestrian/landscape area in one place in order for it to be a strong public gesture. If further public amenity is going to be provided, I consider it should be in conjunction with the town square proposal as noted above, rather than in Wellington Street.

### **Pre-hearing Report**

- 6.4 I have reviewed the report prepared by the Council's urban design consultant Lauren White. Ms White notes in her report that Woolworths has actively engaged with the Council on urban design matters, which has result in an "amended design solution better meeting the outcomes expected in the District Plan".<sup>6</sup>
- 6.5 Ms White concludes that while some of the specific outcomes envisaged by the District Plan have not been met, the Proposal overall is acceptable from an urban design viewpoint. She recommends the application is approved.<sup>7</sup> I agree with Ms White's conclusions.

<sup>6</sup> Pokeno Countdown UD Assessment, dated 29 July 2019, at page 6.

<sup>7</sup> Pokeno Countdown UD Assessment, dated 29 July 2019, at page 14.

6.6 Ms White says that a pedestrian crossing over Great South Road would reinforce the connection between one side of the road and the other.<sup>8</sup> While I agree with this outcome in principle, I understand that it is not part of the Proposal and the Council do not have any intention to construct it. It is not an essential component of the Proposal.

6.7 I have also reviewed the recommendation in the Council officer's Pre-hearing Report which concludes that:<sup>9</sup>

A supermarket provides a much-needed amenity for the town's residents. It is my view the development will likely act as a catalyst for further development within the town centre which has not occurred at the same rate in parallel with the growth of the residential areas. I am therefore of the opinion that on balance the effects on urban design and amenity are acceptable in this instance.

6.8 I agree with this conclusion that the overall community benefit of the Proposal justifies it being approved.

## 7. CONCLUSION

7.1 As part of the wider design team, I have looked at numerous ways in which the operation of a large supermarket could be integrated into an emerging urban design of Pokeno town centre. While the very prescriptive suggestions set out in the District Plan may be one way of achieving good urban design, they are not the only way. Given the wider benefits to Pokeno in having the supermarket at its centre, I consider the finalised design response is, on balance, an acceptable response to the District Plan.

**Graeme Scott**  
**9 August 2019**

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<sup>8</sup> Pokeno Countdown UD Assessment, dated 29 July 2019, at page 14.

<sup>9</sup> Pre-hearing Report, at 8.3.

## ATTACHMENT A – BUSINESS ZONE (POKENO) DESIGN ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Criteria	Assessment against Proposal
<b>Design Element 1: Site Planning</b>	
1. The Great South Road boundary of any site between Market Square and Cambridge Street should be lined by continuous building frontage to provide pedestrian amenity adjoining the road.	Due to the operational requirements of Woolworths' stores, the supermarket building cannot be built on the Great South Road frontage. However, the Proposal includes a stylised canopy and an attractive landscaped plaza space with seating, gardens and lighting which will provide pedestrian amenity adjoining the road.
2. Great South Road from Market Square to Cambridge Street should be provided with continuous verandahs built to substantially cover the width of the footpath.	While this criterion is not fully met, the proposed street verandah partly meets this criterion.
3. Verandahs should generally be provided over footpaths on the other road frontages as shown on the plan opposite.	Refer above in relation to criterion 2.
4. On sites located between Market Street and Cambridge Street buildings should generally adopt a "perimeter block" layout, and parking and service areas should be accessed from side roads and not Great South Road.	This criterion is met in part. The supermarket building typology is the opposite of a perimeter block typology, but the servicing is off the side road.
5. If possible, two vehicle access points on different roads (other than Great South Road between Market Square and Cambridge Street) should be provided for car parking areas.	Due to the site abutting only one site street (Wellington Street), the Proposal cannot comply with this criterion.
6. The principal pedestrian entries of all buildings and tenancies should face a road and be conveniently located and clearly identifiable.	The pedestrian entry location to the supermarket building and canopies leading to it make it highly visible.
7. If buildings cannot be built to all road boundaries (other than identified parts of Great South Road, where this is expected), attractively landscaped areas should be provided between the building and the open road frontage. If possible, the use of such areas for parking should be limited to not more than two rows of car parking to avoid adverse effects on the streetscape and pedestrian amenity.	Due to the need to aggregate all customer parking in one legible area as close to the supermarket building entrance as possible, the Proposal cannot comply with this requirement.
8. Outdoor storage should be avoided or concealed from view from public roads by internalisation within or by the configuration of the building, (preferred), or by screen fencing.	The storage / loading area to the rear of the Site is fully fenced and gated.

Criteria	Assessment against Proposal
<p>9. Stormwater treatment device should be incorporated into the design, consistent with the adopted Catchment Management Plan, relevant regional technical publications and NZS4404:2010.</p> <p>Advisory Note: The Regional Infrastructure Technical Specifications is Council's current Engineering Code of Practice.</p>	<p>A combination of low impact and reticulated systems will provide suitable treatment and detention as required in compliance with this criterion.</p>
<p>10. Where the Helenslee Stream channel is identified as "perennial stream with riparian margin" on the Pokeno Structure Plan (Part 54.15A), it should be retained and a vegetated buffer should be provided on both sides of the channel.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>11. Vegetated buffers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include native specimen trees on the lower and upper banks of the stream, and</li> <li>• Provide a minimum of 10 metres of native planting.</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>
<b>Design Element 2: Building Form, Public Interface and External Appearance</b>	
<p>1. When viewed from the road or any public space, buildings should create visual interest through articulation, openings, and variation, and should be in accordance with any design theme that has been developed for the area.</p>	<p>The wall panels have been varied in height, colour and texture to avoid a monolithic box appearance. Full reasons are set out in sections 6 and 7 of my Urban Design Assessment.</p>
<p>2. Solid blank walls on or facing a road frontage should be avoided.</p>	<p>Refer above in relation to criterion 1. Full reasons are set out in sections 6 and 7 of my Urban Design Assessment.</p>
<p>3. Large expanses of roof should be broken up and varied to provide visual interest when viewed from elevated public open spaces.</p>	<p>Partially met by the variation in parapet height and wall panel variation.</p>
<p>4. Buildings should front directly onto or face onto roads and concentrate main entries and windows along roads or road-facing frontages</p>	<p>While the Proposal does not comply with this requirement for the reasons outlined above, the proposed street verandah and associated vertical structures go some way to meeting the requirements of this criterion.</p>
<p>5. The principal pedestrian entries of all buildings and tenancies should be articulated in the building elevation.</p>	<p>Canopies have been incorporated into the design to signal the entrance and pick-up points. Full reasons are set out in sections 6 and 7 of my Urban Design Assessment.</p>
<p>6. Buildings on corners should utilise design features which emphasise and address the corner.</p>	<p>The corner pylon sign partially addresses the signalling of the corner (although this then conflicts with criterion 8 below).</p>

Criteria	Assessment against Proposal
7. Large industrial doors (e.g. for loading bays) should be concealed from view from the road. If they are visible they should not dominate the elevation and should generally be set back further than the front face of the building.	The larger truck / loading doors have been concealed. Full reasons are set out in section 6 and 7 of my Urban Design Assessment.
8. Signage should be designed to fit with the building, be located on the buildings rather than on freestanding signs, and should not extend above the eaves or parapets. (Refer to Part 15.4 of the plan.)	As noted above, the corner pylon sign conflicts with this criterion.
<b>Design Element 3: Open Spaces, Parking Areas and Landscaping</b>	
1. Open spaces (particularly those associated with streams), car parks, and their landscaping should be well-designed and accessible.	The proposed landscaping is of a high quality and is accessible.
2. Open spaces should have active edges, should be overlooked by windows from buildings on the same site or other sites in the Business Zone, and should be visible from roads.	The carpark has good visibility into it from the streets.
3. Open spaces should be safe, with building edges and soft landscaping designed (and species selected) to avoid creating entrapment spots.	As above, the carpark has good visibility into it from the streets. The layout of the supermarket and carpark on the Site contributes to safety.
4. Streams should be enhanced with riparian planting and may also provide public walking access.	N/A
5. Open space design should include provision of safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists, clear of car parking and manoeuvring.	The carpark has a safe pedestrian route through it.
6. Parking and movement layouts should be designed for safe and effective movement of vehicles through an easily understood layout with appropriate surface markings and signs.	The carpark has been well-designed to provide a legible and easily understood layout.
7. Where car parking is provided on a site which abuts land zoned Residential 2, it should be screened by buildings, fencing and/or landscaping.	The carpark is not visible from residential areas.