

**BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL**

**UNDER** the Resource Management Act 1991  
and the Canterbury Earthquake  
(Christchurch Replacement District  
Plan) Order 2014

**IN THE MATTER OF** **THE PROPOSED CHRISTCHURCH  
REPLACEMENT DISTRICT PLAN –  
CHAPTERS 15 AND 16 –  
COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL**

**SUBMITTER** **AMP CAPITAL PALMS PTY  
LIMITED (SUBMITTER 814)**

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF CHRISTOPHER NEIL MEIKLE ON  
BEHALF OF AMP CAPITAL PALMS PTY LIMITED**

**24 April 2015**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1 My name is Christopher Neil Meikle. I am a Registered Architect, and an Executive Director of Woodhams Meikle Zhan Architects (WMZA) – an Architectural Consultancy firm. I have 38 years professional practice experience.
- 2 WMZA works for many of New Zealand’s major corporate companies and in recent times has had a staff of in excess of 85 employees.
- 3 My Qualifications are as follows:
  - (a) Bachelor of Architecture Degree from Auckland University (B.Arch)
  - (b) Architect Member of the New Zealand Institutes of Architects (ANZIA)
  - (c) Post Graduate Diploma in Business Marketing from Auckland University (Dip Bus. Mktg)
  - (d) Member of the New Zealand Institute of Building (MNZIOB)
  - (e) Registered Architect for 36 years (since 1979)
- 4 My area of expertise is in Retail Architecture, Master Planning and Retail Concept Architecture.
- 5 I have been involved in many major retail developments throughout New Zealand and China and some recent projects undertaken are detailed in Attachment 1 to this evidence.
- 6 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. I have complied with it in preparing this evidence and I agree to comply with it in presenting evidence at this hearing. The evidence that I give is within my area of expertise except where I state that my evidence is given in reliance on another person’s evidence. I have considered all material facts that are known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express in this evidence.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 7 The Palms Shopping Centre is an attractive award winning shopping centre in the Shirley Area of Christchurch.
- 8 The Palms currently occupies 90 percent of its developable area and any practicable further development of the site is severely limited.
- 9 Future retail expansion within the current site would need to occupy the existing on grade undercover carpark areas and as a consequence, the development site's car parking requirement would need to be accommodated in an expensive to build multi-deck carpark.
- 10 The construction of a multi deck carpark would severely restrict access to the shopping centre, impact on circulation around the site and hinder direct servicing of the shopping centre tenancies.
- 11 In my opinion the establishment of a new commercial zone adjacent to the existing Shopping Centre would allow the opportunity for a sensible, in scale and well planned future retail expansion. The expanded zone would allow The Palms to continue to be a competitive sustainable asset providing a high level of amenity to the local and wider community.

### **Design Context – The Existing Palms Shopping Centre**

- 12 The Palms Shopping Centre is sited on the corner of Marshland Road and New Brighton Road. The centre provides 39,331m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor area incorporating 29,103m<sup>2</sup> for GLFA plus a 1600 seat Cinema Complex and an offering of 100 retail tenancies.
- 13 The Palms Shopping Centre has a very attractive main entry on the corner of Marshland Road and New Brighton Road that won a NZIA silver award for design in 2004.
- 14 The facades in this area are interestingly proportioned to provide a unique entry statement. The relationship of the building to open space provides the opportunity for a nicely landscaped court area which is utilised for outdoor dining. The Marshland/New Brighton Road entry is also the main accessway to the Reading Cinema complex on the shopping centre first floor.

- 15 The shopping centre offers 1450 carpark spaces - with 810 of these parks on an elevated first and part second floor. Although the centre provides 646 under cover carparks, the majority of car parks are on the first floor level and therefore difficult to access and remote from the main entries to the shopping centre. The second carpark part level is designated for staff parking - as it is remote - and has no direct connection to the retail floors.
- 16 The Palms Shopping Centre occupies nearly 90 percent of its 5.68 Ha. site. The balance of the site provides for servicing the centre, circulation and a small amount of on grade open customer carparks.
- 17 The site is constrained by its size - and this clearly impacts on:
- (i) servicing the shopping centre
  - (ii) the ability for customers to find convenient carparks and
  - (iii) the ability for the centre to have a suitable interface with public and alternative transportation drop off areas.
- 18 The Palms Shopping Centre at 39,331m<sup>2</sup> is not as large as some of its competitors in Christchurch, particularly when compared to the retail offering at Westfield's Riccarton Shopping Centre at 54,000m<sup>2</sup> and the Kiwi Property's Northlands Shopping Centre at 41,000m<sup>2</sup>. Although attractive and inviting to its customers it suffers from a small retail offering and therefore I believe is not trading to the full potential of its catchment<sup>1</sup>.
- 19 As a consequence of not providing a comprehensive retail offering, there would undoubtedly be leakage of retail spending to other Retail Centres in the Christchurch area<sup>2</sup>. This conclusion is supported by the fact that there is a demand from prospective tenants for additional leasable retail space in the shopping centre.
- 20 The Architectural aesthetic of the centre at the corner of Marshland Road New Brighton Road is highly recognisable and thereby contributes to a sense of identity and place for the local residents - and as such, clearly provides a strong focus or centre for the Shirley area. The Centre could be referred to as the 'heart' of the community area. As a 'heart' The Palms provides the natural place for meeting

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence of Tony Dimasi, paragraph 23(iii) and 24

<sup>2</sup> Evidence of Tony Dimasi, paragraph 23(iii) and 24

and socialising with friends and family – end enjoying both shopping and leisure activities.

### **Development Potential - Challenges and Constraints of the existing Shopping Centre**

- 21 Woodhams Meikle Zhan Architects (WMZA) was engaged by the submitter – AMP Capital Palms Pty Ltd in July 2009 to investigate the opportunity to increase the retail component of the Palms Shopping Centre. WMZA identified that due to constrained site area and existing building structures the only opportunity to expand the shopping centre, within the current site, was into the area of carpark between the existing Centre and Marshland Road. As a consequence, the carpark would need to be relocated to an extended multi-deck structure.
- 22 A Resource Consent was applied for and granted on 20th April 2010 to allow expansion to the Shopping Centre by 10,242m<sup>2</sup> of (GLFA made up of specialty retail and mini major retail). Carparking was provided by way of an extension to the carpark multi-deck to offset the lost carparks on grade and to provide additional carparks for the proposed new retail area. The only area available to expand the existing multi deck carpark was over the proposed retail expansion space.
- 23 A total of 1818 carparks were to be provided with the inclusion of 37 accessible car parks. An increase of 348 carparks in total.
- 24 Implementing the resource consent would present many challenges to the developer.
- 25 The principal challenge would be overcoming the constraint imposed by the unavailability of an on-grade carparking area. The only solution available to the designers necessitated that all carparks would be located in a multi-deck structure and as a consequence remote from the shopping centre access.
- 26 Access to the Shopping Centre would be badly compromised with a limited number of vertical transportation connections available.
- 27 Retailers that require carparks in close proximity to their business would be severely affected. In particular the supermarket operator and retailers requiring trolley supply & return would be disadvantaged.

- 28 The proposal to provide carparks on additional multiple levels would also require re-engineering of the existing structure. The multi deck carpark would require significant seismic engineering design with the consequential significant cost to construct.
- 29 Additionally the requirement of an expanded multi-deck carpark over the additional trading floor area would impose a column grid over more than 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of prime retail area. The end result would hinder a core retail development objective to provide an uncluttered column free space to enable retail tenants flexibility of store layout design.
- 30 A significant impact arising from the intensive development of available developable area on the subject site is the resulting inconvenience to the existing retailers and their customers during construction. Staging of the proposed building works would be necessary and would impose logistical problems with respect to maintaining both access to the Shopping Centre during the trading day and availability of carparks for customers on site. (Existing carparks would be unavailable throughout the construction process).
- 31 The maximising of the limited available developable area of the subject site would lessen the opportunity to enhance the overall ambience of the Centre. There would be limited opportunity to provide a well-considered integration with the immediate environs. Landscaping would be severely limited – with appropriate set backs not possible – and the resulting Urban Design considerations of a major extension compromised.

Urban Design considerations affected would be:

- i) the ability to create alternative focus to the centre.
- ii) establishing an attractive realm of both enlivened street edges and open spaces.
- iii) the ability to explore mixed use development opportunities.
- iv) the space available for planning to ensure community safety whilst providing a pleasant community environment.

- v) The opportunity to rationalise public transport interfaces and to introduce transportation concepts such as 'bus ports' and a local public transport hub.
- 32 To summarise, the 2010 Resource Consent demonstrated that whilst intensification with existing boundaries at The Palms is possible on paper, its viable delivery is questionable.

### **Rezoning adjacent land for future expansion of The Palms Shopping Centre**

- 33 If growth and development of The Palms is to occur, then from a design perspective a sensible approach would be to allow the shopping centre to expand on-grade, outside the current site, to enable both future related growth and carpark accessibility.
- 34 An on-grade expansion would allow for practical servicing of the centre, convenient carparking for customers and room to provide an urban designed, people friendly interface to surrounding residential areas and future intensified residential developments.
- 35 Additional commercially zoned land areas would allow a 'softening of the edges' approach and socially acceptable integration of commercial expansion with the surrounding residential areas.
- 36 Expansion on-grade would allow the Architects to design for a better Architectural Urban Planned solution.
- 37 If Commercial Core zoning is adopted for the area to the north of the Palms shopping centre the zone would allow:
- (a) the Shopping Centre to fully reach its potential as a destination shopping centre.
  - (b) a sensible expansion of the Centre and allow a wide range of possible activities on the site.
  - (c) the space for street edges to be activated or softened with set-backs as necessary to achieve relevant Urban Design edge considerations.
  - (d) Residential boundary set-backs would allow for a landscaped buffer zone to enhance the interface with the adjoining zones.

- (e) Recession planes would ensure the developments in the area would be of a sympathetic scale to the surrounding environment.
- (f) Landscaping requirements would ensure the development is also sympathetically integrated into the surrounding areas. The Palms has already achieved an excellent standard of landscape design and aesthetic appeal and the zoning would enable the future development to maintain this high standard.
- (g) The space to further enhance The Shopping Centre as the 'heart' or 'focus' for the Shirley area.
- (h) Provide for cycle ways and public thru' site linkages and other pedestrian friendly interfaces.
- (i) The opportunity to improve the streetscape in the streets bordering the new commercial area and by using planting and road calming devices and coherent spatial pedestrianised linkages.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 38 The establishment of new commercially zoned land adjacent to the Palms shopping centre will cater for future growth – and in time – an enhanced more vibrant, sustainable centre for Shirley and the wider area. It is a preferable social, commercial and Urban Design outcome.
- 39 In my opinion the existing centre is hamstrung by the lack of available land that is suitably zoned to enable a practical and sensible expansion of the existing retail offering.
- 40 There now exists an opportunity to provide for a rational proper expansion of the existing retail offering – to satisfy both current and future needs – and to provide a high level of amenity to be enjoyed by the local and wider community.



**Christopher N. Meikle**

**24 April 2015**

## **Attachment I**

The following is a list of some of the Retail Projects, Retail Precinct Master Planning and Concept Design of projects recently undertaken by Chris Meikle and WMZA.

### **AMP Capital Shopping Centres**

Director in Charge, Master Planning Architect & Concept Architect.

- Botany Downs Shopping Centre – Auckland  
Additions, Alterations & Refurbishment
- Bayfair Shopping Centre – Tauranga  
Concepts for a large scale (15-20,000m<sup>2</sup>) expansion of the Shopping Centre
- The Palms – Christchurch  
10,000m<sup>2</sup> Concepts for Retail expansion to Shopping Centre
- Merivale Shopping Centre – Christchurch  
Additions, Alterations & ambience package  
Structural/Seismic upgrade and entry revamp & rebuild of damaged buildings

### **Westfield New Zealand**

- Riccarton Shopping Centre  
Entertainment & Lifestyle extension & Rotherham St 'living street' retail precinct.
- Albany Shopping Centre  
Stage 1 Shopping Centre & Cinemas development
- Manukau Shopping Centre  
Cinema & Mall extension
- Chartwell Shopping Centre  
Cinema & Mall extension
- Nuffield Street Retail Precinct  
'Living St' Retail Concept
- 277 Broadway Shopping Centre  
RMA Submission for multi-level extension to Shopping Centre
- 309 Broadway – New Shopping Centre  
RMA Submission for new multi-level shopping centre extension to 277 Broadway including cinemas.

### **Tesco Property China Ltd**

- 250,000m<sup>2</sup> Shopping Centre concept designs and fitout designs for:

Zhangshan Ave – Guangzhou  
Dongguan – Dongzhong  
Zhongshan – Sunwen  
Huizhou – Donghuxi  
Zhongshan – Qiwan  
Yangzhou – Wenchang

### **New Zealand Retail Property Group**

- 250,000m<sup>2</sup> Bulk Retail Precincts  
Yard Based Precinct – Westgate  
Bulky goods Precinct – Westgate

### **DNZ**

- Main St Shopping Precinct for Westgate Shopping Centre – Cruciform project

### **Progressive Enterprises**

Master Plan for Retail Shopping Centres

- Albany Town Centre
- Beachlands Commercial Precinct
- Hobsonville Village Commercial Precinct

### **Additional Retail Experience:**

#### **Progressive Enterprises Ltd:-**

I am the WMZA Relationship Manager and Director in charge of the Progressive work. I have been involved in the feasibility analysis of prospective development sites throughout New Zealand. WMZA – under a separate commission – design the supermarkets, produce briefing drawings, develops the designs and produces Detail documentation for Building Consent & Tender.

We have undertaken many greenfield supermarket designs and have produced documentation for Foodtown, Woolworths, Countdown, Fresh Choice and Super Value Supermarkets.

Including recently:

Foodtown Howick  
Foodtown Colombo St, Christchurch  
Foodtown Quay St, Auckland  
Foodtown Botany Downs, Auckland  
Woolworths Fielding  
Countdown Stoke Nelson  
Countdown Manukau  
Countdown Moorhouse Ave, Christchurch  
Countdown Fraser Cove  
Countdown Katere New Plymouth

Countdown Te Rapa, Hamilton  
Countdown Te Awamutu

- WMZA has been engaged as designers of hundreds of supermarket refurbishments from minor store re-lays through to complete refurbishments, some with retail floor plate extensions.

Notably recently:

- Foodtown Sylvia Park
- Foodtown Queensgate Wellington
- Woolworths The Palms, Christchurch
- Woolworths Milford
- Foodtown/Countdown Greenlane
- Countdown Lower Hutt
- Countdown Porirua
- Countdown Northlands, Christchurch

### **Brookfield Multiplex Developments**

WMZA has been involved with the design & documentation for Shopping Centre and Bulk Retail projects for Brookfield Multiplex including:

- Bulk Retail Centre, Whakatane
- Bulk Retail Centre, New Plymouth
- Southcity Shopping Centre – Christchurch  
- Master Planning and RMA for major additions & alterations.

### **Hasting District Council**

WMZA was commissioned by Hastings District Council to provide a concept design for the redevelopment of Hastings City Centre including specialty shops and large format stores.

### **Jigsaw Developments - Tauranga**

I was the Concept Architect for a New 50,000m<sup>2</sup> Retail Shopping Centre at Papamoa, Tauranga.

### **Miscellaneous & Other Examples:**

- Master Planning of Sylvia Park Retail Shopping Centre for Phillip Ling and Mark Luker – Kiwi Income Property Trust.
- Master Planning for the Base Shopping Centre Hamilton on the Te Rapa Airforce Base site for the Tainui.
- Design & Documentations for Meadowbank Shopping Centre and Kelston Shopping Centre for Progressive Enterprises.
- Design & Documentation for Westgate Shopping Centre for Progressive.

- Preliminary Design & Documentation for proposed extension to Barrington Shopping Centre, Christchurch for Centro Properties.
- Quadrant Properties – (David Levene’s Property Company). Small specialty Retail & Bulk Retail Projects.
- Placemakers NZ  
WMZA have been involved with the new Retail & Trade Warehouse Outlet rollout for Placemakers throughout New Zealand.
- Farmers Trading Company – (Farmers)  
Assistance with interior design & documentation.
- Sony New Zealand  
Award winning store designs for Sonystyle Stores Auckland, Wellington & Christchurch.
- DTR New Zealand  
Assisting with rollout for refurbishment & new stores for DTR throughout New Zealand.