

## Attachment 13 – Heritage Consultant Report

Christo Aitken & Associates ■ PO Box 1051 Bathurst NSW 2795 ■ P 0263 375260 ■ M 0427 375260 ■ E christoaitken@bigpond.com

### Heritage / Urban Design Advice

Council : Blue Mountains City Council  
From : Christo Aitken Heritage Advisor  
Attention : Will Langevad  
Copy : Byron Tully  
Subject : DA X/821/2009



Date : 26/10/09

No of Pages : 1/6

Will

#### Leura – 152-160 Leura Mall, New Development

I refer to the above DA (ref X/821/2009) and Heritage Referral dated 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009 for new retail development with underground car parking above premises in Leura Mall. A preliminary site inspection occurred on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009. This report is based on that inspection together with the following documents included with the Heritage Referral: architectural drawings prepared by *D+R Architects* (ref 04006 DA01.01E, 02G, 03G04E, 05H, 06D, 07E, 08C, 09D, 10E, 11C and 12B); Heritage Impact Statement prepared by *Godden Mackay Logan* dated June 2009.

#### Property Details

Property Address: 152-160, 164A and 168A Leura Mall, 15-7 Grose Street; 154-156 Megalong Street Leura

Property Description: L1 DP1123432, L B DP336264, L 11 DP656593, L 3 DP574808, L4 DP574808, L 1 DP721833, L 2 DP721833 and DP916990

Related Property Zones: Village – Town Centre  
Precinct – VTC – LE01  
Precinct – VTC – LE03

Heritage Reference: Heritage Conservation Area LA018

Heritage Items in the Vicinity: BMCC LEP 2005

LA071 Leura Post Office, Leura Mall

LA075 to LA077 Shops, Leura Mall

LA035 Cottage Group 1 to 7 Grose Street

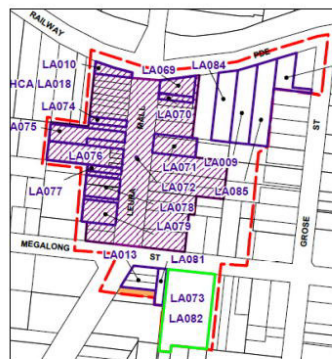
LA091 to LA092 Residences 19, 21 and 23 Grose Street

LA034 Leura Uniting Church, Grose Street

LA084 to LA085 Residences, 87 to 89 Railway Parade

LA009 Residence, 88 Railway Parade

Applicant Details: Ms H Higgins; TPG North Sydney



## **Background**

The central area of Leura Mall is probably one of the most significant commercial precincts in the Blue Mountains remarkable for its high aesthetic qualities as well as its rarity and degree of intactness. The precinct is considered as having state level significance. Although a relatively small and compact urban precinct it attracts a substantial number of visitors with considerable economic benefits for the Blue Mountains generally. This is generally reflected in the high quality of its shopping. The attraction for its visitors and residents alike is because of a range of aspects including its distinctive village character, the discretely sophisticated retail presence, its intact historic buildings and shopfronts, the sensitively scaled streetscape, its established landscaped pedestrian spaces, the leafy footpaths and the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century atmosphere generally.

The history of Leura's evolution and the development of Leura Mall are reasonably well documented in the BMCC Heritage Inventory Sheet (ref SHI 1170519). This has been supplemented with research and information resulting from the 2005 Development Application for this site and its supporting documents, in particular the Heritage Analysis and Impact Statement (Integrated Design 2005). The current DA and its supporting Heritage Impact Statement similarly reinforces the critical aspects in the character and significance of the Mall, its buildings and its urban spaces. In the interests of brevity and avoiding repetition in this assessment there may be no need to reiterate those aspects but to focus on the current development issues.

Development within the Mall largely occurred in the Federation and Edwardian period with only limited development in recent years. The most obvious areas of development occurred in the mid 1960s with the demolition of the historic building adjacent to the former Leura Post office and the establishment of the Colless food handling and sales business. The sale of the site and the subsequent application for mixed retail and residential development only compounded what was an insensitive and unsightly section central in the Mall. Development consent for those works was granted by the NSW Land & Environment Court in 2005 and demolition and excavation works commenced. Those works halted in 2006 and the site was subsequently passed into new ownership.

The current proposals constitute a new DA with a focus on the retail component opportunities of this site although some aspects remain similar as noted below.

## **Current Proposals**

The current proposals can be summarised as follows:

1. Demolition works to clear the existing site. Additional site clearance and excavation to form basement carparking similar to that approved in 2005. Some of this work involves demolition of 2005 works.
2. Retention, integration and reuse of the 2 shops at the southern end of the frontage of Leura Mall (Nos 156 and 160).
3. Reinstatement and refurbishment of the open walkway between the above 2 shops. This involves relocation of a recent electrical substation. Adaptation of the walkway to provide covered access.
4. Construction of 3 new specialty shops at the northern end of the site fronting Leura Mall.
5. Construction of a new Woolworths supermarket behind the frontage of shops with basement car parking.
6. Additional landscaping to the front and rear of the site
7. New signage to the front and the rear of the building.

The construction of a relatively large supermarket will still result in substantial physical, visual and social impact to the existing character and historical use of the Leura Mall. However the current proposals are a more appropriate visual response to the character of the Mall, particularly in terms of the bulk, height and scale of new development as compared to the 2005 development proposals. The current proposals have also more sensitively addressed the streetscape issues and the form and massing of the building envelopes generally.

## Issues

The following heritage / urban design issues arise from the proposals:

### Regarding the Documentation Generally

- The architectural drawings adequately illustrate the proposals in plan, elevation and section. However with the scale of development envisaged and the potential impact on 3 historic streetscapes (Leura Mall, Megalong Street and Grose Street) it would have been preferable for a number of perspective views from significant locations to have been included in the Development Application.
- The Heritage Impact Statement generally follows the approach recommended by the Heritage Branch and the DoP in their guideline documents. The following comments relate to the document generally:
  - The focus of the document is on issues relating to Leura Mall with little reference to the heritage items in the vicinity in surrounding streets. The extracts from the BMCC LEP 2005 on the cover page of this report illustrate that there are a number of listed items adjacent to the development on Megalong, Grose and Railway Parade. While it is appropriate to focus on Leura Mall, it would have been useful for the SOHI to include brief comment on views to and from the site from the surrounding streets and measures taken to mitigate a visual impact. These views will be of the modern supermarket building and will not necessarily be screened from view as is Leura Mall. Also, it would have been useful to have some comment regarding the proposed external finishes and the reasoning behind the proposals.
  - I generally agree with the conclusions and recommendations of the Heritage Impact Statement that the proposed development is of “*an appropriate one- to two storey scale within this significant conservation area...*” and that “*further design development is required for a number of aspects of the proposals*”. These aspects are addressed in more detail below:

### Regarding the Proposals

This section reviews the proposed works in the absence of detailed specifications or works schedules from the information in section 4.0 of the HIS “*Description of Proposed Works*”.

- Re Item 1 – Demolition. None of this work appears to involve significant fabric of the site.
- Re Item 2 – Retention and Integration of 2 existing shops (nos 156 and 158). This is a highly positive aspect to the proposed development, which will integrate the new work within the old, and the existing urban context. The two existing shops are significant elements in the streetscape and will enhance the overall development. The following points may require clarification or feedback from the applicant:
  - The HIS states that “no works are currently proposed to these buildings” (ref HIS p10). Does this include no external repairs, refurbishment, repainting etc? If refurbishment works are to occur then to clarify their extent and detail.
  - The architectural drawings show that the 2 buildings will be integrated into the overall development. New building work will occur around the sides and rear of the buildings and they will be ‘absorbed’ into the development. Some clarification is necessary to confirm that (i) the new work is freestanding and does not unnecessarily attach itself to the existing buildings and that (ii) the works specifications will include details of how to limit the extent of physical ‘impact’ there will be on the fabric of the existing buildings.
- Re Item 3 - Reinstatement and refurbishment of the open walkway. This is a positive aspect of the proposed development, which reinforces the existing pedestrian laneway pattern in Leura as it is an important aspect in the village character. Some clarification is necessary to confirm the following:
  - The proposed paving material, colour and texture not included on the colour schedule

- The proposed signage at the Mall end of this walkway. This issue will be highly important in the overall success of these proposals. The current proposals to extend the covered walkway across the footpath and apparently to add a large illuminated(?) sign on the end of the awning is inappropriate. Signage currently in the Mall is relatively discrete and often alluringly partially screened by the trees. This is part of the appealing character of this shopping precinct. The large box attached to the front of the awning is neither a sophisticated nor traditional design solution. The HIS also recognises that this signage could be improved (ref HIS p19).

There are 2 issues to consider (i) the extent of the awning and (ii) the signage options:

Regarding the extent of the awning...the architectural drawings propose that it extends out between the two existing awnings to the outer edge of the footpath. However, it is recommended that the gap between the two existing buildings and their awnings be retained...and that the cover to the walkway not extend beyond the building line. This would reinforce the presence of the walkway and the original gap between the buildings. It would also avoid a sensitive design issue of introducing a new element between two existing awnings. There is insufficient detail on the drawings to consider this proposal.

Regarding the signage...it is preferable that the large Woolworths logo be set back to the building line...or perhaps integrated behind a glazed wall as suggested in the HIS (ref HIS p19). It is also preferred that it be spotlit rather than backlit illuminated. The other solution suggested in the HIS is for an illuminated 'hamper' or 'V' box under awning. If an awning solution is further explored an under awning hamper of a similar scale and character to other hampers in the Mall would be preferable to a high level logo in the glazed walkway or a low level V box solution.

- Re Item 4 - Construction of 3 new specialty shops. The proposed buildings are relatively modest and appear to have addressed some of the key streetscape issues from the BMCC LEP 2005 and indirectly from the 2005 Better Living DCP. The general massing and arrangement of the facades fronting the Mall are generally sympathetic to the scale and character of the precinct. The changed rhythm from single shop front to paired shopfronts is appropriate as is the varied floor levels, extended height of the parapets and variety of finishes. There are a number of issues that still need to be resolved or refined as follows:
  - Regarding shop number 152 facade. The HIS (ref HIS p16) recommends some "modeling or surface articulation of the parapet, including recessed panels" which is supported. However, the architectural drawing shows some recessed panels fronting the facade. It should be clarified whether the drawings have been updated since writing of the HIS. Additional recessed parapets would not be possible within the existing configuration and proportion of panels.
  - Regarding shop number 152 north elevation. It would be preferable for the pitch of the raked parapet top to be increased slightly. Reducing the height at the rear and increasing the height at the front could achieve this.
  - Regarding the recessed wall to the east of shop number 152. It is important to breakup the massing and scale of the large forms proposed by this development. A substantial separation between the specialty shops fronting the Mall and the bulky supermarket at the rear would be an appropriate juncture point. The change in colour proposed on the drawings is inadequate a break. The HIS noted this issue and recommended a setback of 600mm with potential for planting. In view of the scale of the Mall and the scale of the existing development it would be preferable for a setback of at least 1m.
  - Regarding shop number 154 facade. Painted masonry facades in Leura Mall is one of the dominant built forms. As noted in the HIS (ref HIS p16) the proposed painted cfc panels are likely to be out of step with the general character of buildings in the vicinity.
  - Regarding the 3 new shopfront entrances. A recessed doorway at shop entry is a common traditional feature in the Mall. The splayed entry with recessed door is

characteristic. The architectural plans do not currently show any entrances but the HIS (ref HIS p11) refers to a pair of door slightly set back for shop number 154. It is recommended that the doorways to the 3 shops be recessed back from the edge of the footpath in the manner typical of the Mall.

- Regarding the 3 new shopfronts joinery. The traditional character of the Mall is distinctive and evident in its detailing. The HIS notes (ref HIS p16) that there is a desire through design development to address the LEP objectives of “form and finishes...complimentary to the architectural character of the existing mainstreet shop-terraces dating from the Edwardian or Interwar era”. The design of the shopfronts, the framing and the doors will be critical to the success of this frontage. Poorly designed frontages are evident in the aluminium framing of the newsagent and Westpac in the Mall. Sensitively designed frontages are evident in the new arcade (ref Aspects of Leura Arcade) adjacent to this proposed development. The use of painted timber framing and door joinery is recommended to these 3 new shopfronts. The doors should be traditionally detailed, single or double hinged and not automatic sliding on this elevation.
- Re Item 5 - Construction of a new Woolworths supermarket. This element is the core of the new development together with its underground car parking. The sensitive screening of the bulk of this structure behind the existing and new shops on the Mall is a positive design approach. It is also appreciated that the height of the building has been kept relatively low and its facades articulated in order to minimize the bulk and scale.

Three-dimensional studies would more clearly illustrate the potential views towards this structure not totally evident from the existing drawings. For instance there is potential for views or some visual encroachment of this building in the area around the former Leura Post Office or similarly from Megalong Street. There are also narrow view angles likely from Grose Street and Railway Parade. The Megalong Street views are likely to be the most obvious but these are tempered by the setback and the carpark landscaping. There is perhaps also potential for additional landscaping in the carpark area if necessary.

The façade, from these relatively important view angles on Megalong and Grose Streets, has been kept relatively low, with the roof top plant and equipment located either to the farther western or the northern roof edges which is positive.

It is not inappropriate that the design of the building away from the street frontages could be more overtly modern as proposed. The variety of materials and articulation of walls will tend to reduce the scale of the building and provide some architectural interest. However the three-dimensional vertical element over the lift shaft is a little out of character with the village. The Leura Urban Conservation Area LA018 extends to the rear of the property and the structure appears similar to a small highway advertising pylon which is not particularly appropriate in this precinct. It has the potential to set a precedent for others to follow within the Conservation Area. It would be preferable for it to be deleted or reduced substantially in height. If it were to be deleted it would reinforce the relatively low roof lines and the horizontality of the building generally. The height of the proposed duct riser may be a natural break line; alternatively, a slightly higher level relating to the “*ri 987.380 apex of food shop roof*” (ref north and east elevations) may be preferable from an architectural viewpoint and extend the duct riser up slightly eliminating the change in level. The Woolworths advertising logo could still be applied to the two walls of the lift shaft at high level.

- Re Item 6 - Additional landscaping. The landscaping proposed is relative minimal. The proposed retention of the existing tree and the HIS recommendation of recovery of landscaping on Leura Mall through loss of the existing driveway is positive.

The proposed espalier wall is a clever design solution within limited available space. It is not apparent from the drawings as to whether it is intended to cover the entire rear wall or only a lower portion. The latter would be preferable.

- **Re Item 7 – New Signage.** Corporate signage in historic precincts is always a sensitive issue. The only signage shown on Leura Mall is the Woolworths logo at the walkway entry point. This has been discussed earlier in relation to the proposed awning. Refer to that section for recommendations.

It is likely that some signage will be required for the 3 new specialty but this is not shown on the drawings. It is recommended that they follow the approach elsewhere in the Mall with signage on the leading edge of the awning and under awning hanging signs.

The proposed signage at the rear of the building within the carpark area does not appear unreasonable. It is assumed that there will be no signage on the northern elevation which is positive.

#### **Recommendations**

The following suggestions may assist in the determination:

- As noted above

Regards



Christo Aitken  
BMCC Heritage Advisor

## MGA

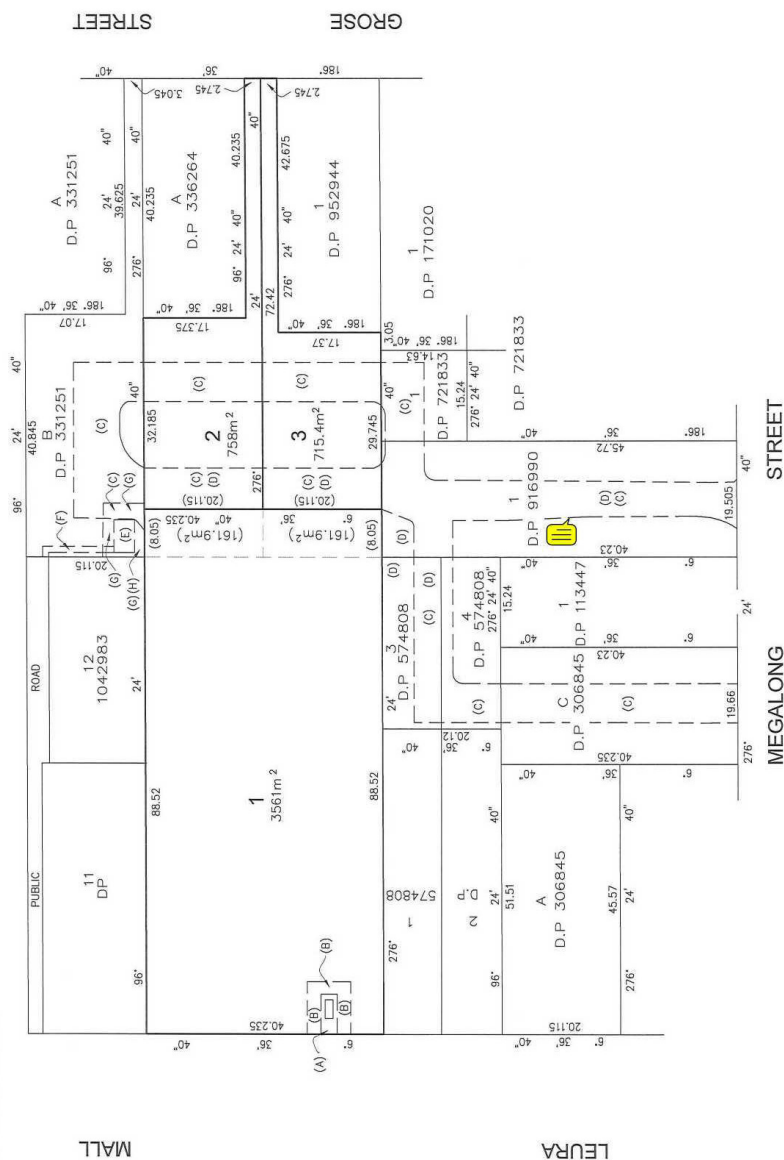


### EXISTING EASEMENTS

- (A) EASEMENT FOR PADMOUNT SUBSTATION (DP1123432) (TO BE EXTINGUISHED)  
(B) RESTRICTION ON THE USE OF LAND (DP1123432) (TO BE EXTINGUISHED)

## PROPOSED EASEMENTS

- (C) RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY VARIABLE WIDTH  
(D) EASEMENT FOR SERVICES VARIABLE WIDTH  
(E) EASEMENT FOR PADMOUNT SUBSTATION 3.5 WIDE  
(F) EASEMENT FOR UNDERGROUND CABLES 1.0 WIDE  
(G) RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF LAND  
(H) EASEMENT FOR ELECTRICITY PURPOSES VARIABLE WIDTH



Surveyor: DAMIAN JOSEPH MAGUIRE  
Date of Survey: 23-11-09  
Surveyor's Ref: 31966-32538DP

PLAN OF SUBDIVISION OF LOT 1 DP 1123432,  
LOT B DP336264, LOT 11 DP656593 AND  
EASEMENTS WITHIN LOT B DP331251, LOT C  
DP 306845, LOTS 3 & 4 DP574808, LOT 1  
DP 916990 AND LOT 1 721833

LGA: BLUE MOUNTAINS  
Locality: LEURA  
Subdivision No:

Registered:

DP

10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140	150
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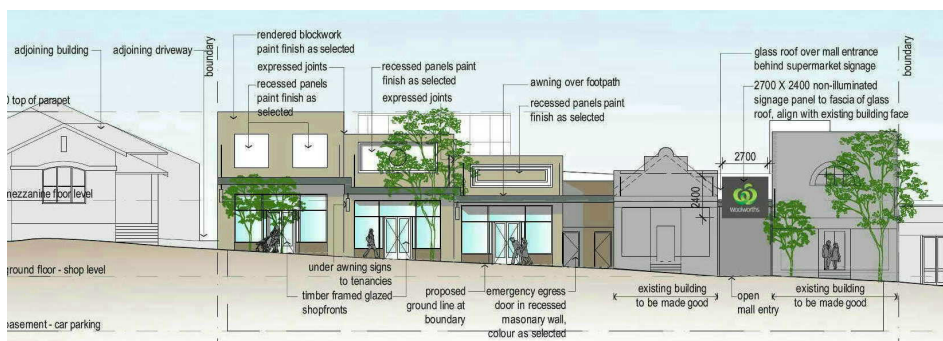


**Attachment 15 –  
Comparison of Existing Court Approval and subject (Woolworths) application**

## Leura Mall

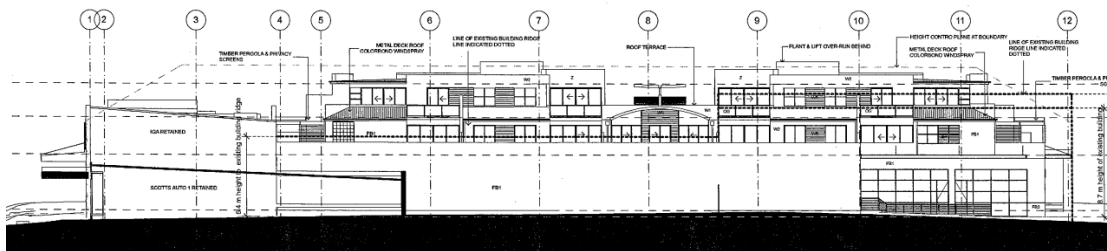


**Existing Court Approval**  
(\*subject to façade extension to Post Office not shown)

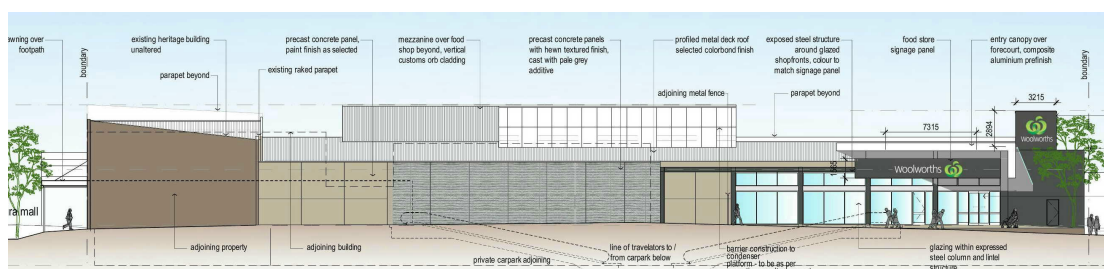


**Woolworths proposal**

## Southern elevation (to car park, Megalong St)



**Existing Court Approval**



**Woolworths proposal**



[illegible]

Architectural elevation drawing of the proposed new two-story street front for the 1000 Broadway retail building. The drawing shows a long, multi-unit building with various storefronts, including large glass windows and doors, and smaller entrances. Labels indicate different materials like aluminum cladding, brick, and stone. Specific features like "PERGOLA ENTRY", "DATA ROOMS", "ELEVATOR", and "STREET AND PARKING LEVEL" are marked. The drawing is oriented horizontally, showing the side profile of the building.

boundary

precast concrete panels with hewn textured finish pale grey/yellow colour to be cast in

precast panel screen barrier to loading area, paint finish as selected

precast concrete panels, paint finish as selected

expressed steel channel column and lintel frame to face of wall cladding

custom orb roofing over mezzanine colourbond finish

vertical channel between rendered finishes

rendered blockwork planter box paint finish as selected

fixed glazing

boundary

telstra site adjoining

existing driveway adjoining

## Woolworths proposal