

PROJECT REVIEW

NORTHWEST SHOPPING MALL, WESTGATE



Project outline

Project cost approx \$160 million, 2.7ha in area (including car parking)

Approximate construction timeline: 18 months

A new shopping mall consisting of approximately 100 shops (including restaurants and cafes), and offices space located at the end of the North-western motorway. The mall is part of a new metropolitan town centre being developed adjacent to the existing commercial development at Westgate.

Total development of this new town centre covers an area of approximately 56 hectares (about 10 times the size of the existing shopping area) and will include retail, big box commercial, residential and small business zones, which will be progressively developed over the next 5-10 years

The catchment area for this development is quoted to encompass approximately 450,000 existing and future houses (this includes new suburbs currently being developed at Huapai, Kumeu, Hobsonville Point and existing suburbs such as West Harbour and Greenhithe).

A comprehensive development plan (CDP) for the overall town centre development, which included the mall site, had been already been agreed to and implemented. (Originally started with the developer and Waitakere City Council about 12 years ago)

Project management

As with any project, issues can crop up that need resolving, communication is key.

Regular project management meetings and emails between all the relevant parties (mall owner, project managers, and major contractors) as well as council regulatory services staff (Building Consent processing and inspections, Health + licensing, as well as code compliance assessors) was agreed upon early on in the project.

This enabled a collaborative approach to the project management to be undertaken right through from consenting / inspections, to issuing of CCC / CPU documentation. It was a change from how the council / applicant dynamic that normally occurs, but as this is a project of a considerable size, it allowed both parties to have more freedom in response to the project requirements.

As mentioned earlier, input from several departments within Regulatory Services was required during the length of project, a single point of contact for both consent processing and inspection was established to enable a smoother flow of information from Council to on-site project team and vice versa.

This single point of contact was also used when it came time for issue of Code Compliance / Public Use Certificate(s), which enabled us to track and manage the mountain of documentation that comes with dealing with approximately 105 Building Consents / exemptions (including main build consents).

Consent processing

From a regulatory (Building Consent) point of view, the project was effectively handled in two stages:

- construction of main structure to closed in stage (involving 5 consents) and;
- fit out of tenancies within Building (96 consents/exemptions)

The use of exemptions, as defined under Schedule 1 of NZ Building Act 2004, for the fit outs that did not involve food or licensed premises (eg: nail bars/ manicurists), was discussed and agreed upon as a method of handling the large number of tenancies that needed to be processed within the timeframe required, to enable the mall to open on time.

As part of this approach, conditions were inserted into the exemption approval letter that required the relevant contractors (such as suspended ceiling installers) to provide certification to the mall management that the work was completed in accordance with trade practise and to the requirements of the New Zealand Building Code.

All the food court tenancies and various other health licensed tenancies were required to obtain Building Consents and dealt with the same time constraints as the exemptions.

Once the dust settles on this project we can take time to reflect on what has been achieved. For sure that some of the lessons learned can be applied to future projects of this size and nature.

