



A new supermarket will eventually be built at Soho Square, once earmarked for a much bigger development.

Picture / Sarah Ivey

Trucks start filling in Soho's gaping hole

by Anne Gibson

About 16,000 truckloads of soil are being carted from South Auckland to fill in part of Ponsonby's yawning chasm.

Contractors Vuksich and Borich last month began the huge job of shifting 24,000 cu m of soil to Soho Square, the 1.3ha city block excavated in an ill-

conceived plan last decade for a huge development that never rose.

Project manager Matthew Vuksich said most of the fill was coming from Manurewa where the contractor won the tender to excavate for a new Countdown supermarket. Vuksich said each truck-and-trailer unit could carry about 15cu m and the site was getting about 40 loads of soil a day.

Last year, supermarket giant Progressive Enterprises called for tenders to fill about a quarter of the gaping hole between Pollen St, Crummer Rd and Williamson Ave, just off Ponsonby Rd.

Luke Schepen, Progressive's national communications and public affairs manager, said the refill was on the eastern half of the site, only partially excavated.

"We are importing and compacting soil on to part of the site which will not be used for the supermarket/mixed use development. This part is being reverted back to levels consistent with the surrounding road network and is expected to be completed by the end of April," he said.

Most of the hole will remain, however, and the new supermarket be built

within that. Schepen said: "We are actively preparing designs, elevations and modelling for our resource consent application."

"We are working closely with Auckland Council planners and urban design team on this and we remain hopeful of starting construction later this year, pending the outcome of the application."