



Planning Assessment Report

Application to Modify the Minister's Approval for the Sydney Water Facility, Potts Hill Reservoirs Site

Major Project 08_0049 MOD 1

1 BACKGROUND

On 7 January 2009 the Minister for Planning approved a project application for the construction of a new facility for Sydney Water on the Potts Hill Reservoirs Site, subject to conditions (MP 08_0049 Sydney Water Workplace Facility). The approval provided for:

- Construction of a two (2) storey 5,914m² office building with a maximum building height of nine (9) metres (excluding any roof mounted plant, equipment or service installations);
- Construction of a warehouse with an attached two (2) storey office building of 6,147m² and a maximum building height of 12 metres (excluding any roof mounted plant, equipment or service installations);
- Parking for 509 vehicles, outdoor storage areas, surrounding hardstand and landscaping areas and demolition of a storage shed.

On 11 March 2009, the proponent submitted a modification application under section 75W of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act) (see **Tag B**)

2 THE PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The proponent is seeking the following amendments (detailed description at **Appendix 1**):

- Increase the size of the warehouse by extending it 25m to the north and minor changes to finished floor and eaves level.
- Increase the size of the office building by extending it 3m to the east and west, reposition slightly to the east and minor changes to finished floor and eaves levels and internal layout.
- New storage sheds approximately 286m² and 6.56m high adjacent to the north west boundary.
- Minor changes to plant/equipment location, landscaping, stormwater, car parking layout and sediment and erosion control measures.

A comparison of the main features of the proposed development with the approved development is as follows:

Item	Approved development	Proposed development
GFA	Office: 5,914m ²	Office: 6,324m ²
	Warehouse: 6,147m ²	Warehouse: 7,729m ²
		Storage shed: 286m ²
	Total: 12,061m²	Total: 14,339m²
Floor space ratio	0.27:1	0.328:1
% ground cover	Approx. 21%	Approx. 26.5%
Landscaping	8,151m ²	6,777m ²
Car parking	509 spaces	506 spaces

including that part closest to the heritage shed is 4.52m, a similar height to the single storey heritage shed. It is therefore considered that the proposed storage shed will not look inappropriate or detract from the heritage sheds. Both the new and the old sheds will be viewed as part of the industrial setting surrounding them, a feature which is part of the heritage significance of the sheds.

Drainage has been designed so that there will be no impact on the heritage sheds. The floor levels are approximately equal and the external hardstand slab has been designed to fall away from the new and existing sheds to stormwater drainage. Roof water is directed to the underground stormwater system.

A Condition 6 of the approval included the preparation of detailed construction management plans and specifies the inclusion of the management of impact on adjacent heritage items. This condition will remain and is considered adequate to ensure the heritage sheds are suitably protected through the construction phase. The Department is therefore satisfied that the heritage items will not be adversely impacted by the proposed amended development.

Traffic and parking

Sydney Water has confirmed that there will be no additional staff using the site to correspond with the increase in floor space. All additions and extensions are solely to provide for additional working and storage space.

To allow for the additional floor space, vehicle parking layout has been amended which has seen the loss of 9 spaces for cars and a slight increase of spaces for both motorbikes and trucks/trailers. The end result is a total reduction in the number of vehicles parking spaces of 3. The modification proposal still complies with the minimum parking rates in the Bankstown Council DCP 2005.

Other modifications

The additional precast concrete cladding to the north and south elevations of the warehouse building will be consist with that approved for the east and west elevations. The plant area and storage bins are in locations which are not visible to the general public and will mean the loss of only a small area of grass within office car park number 2. The addition of water tanks to the north of the site and to the south eastern elevation of the warehouse result in the loss of some landscaping, but their function to both reuse water and for fire protection are considered to compensate for these losses. The decrease in soft landscaping is not considered significant when considering the losses are spread throughout the site and several areas of mass plantings remain. Additional Brushbox and Spotted Gums will be planted along the full length of the south western car park to offset same of this loss.

These changes are therefore considered to be minor with insignificant impacts on planning and environmental aspects of the development and do not diminish the architectural qualities of the building.

Stormwater and Civil works

New civil works plans and an erosion and sediment control plan have been submitted to reflect the proposed modifications. A comprehensive construction management plan as detailed in Condition 6 of the approval will ensure excavation and construction activities will not impact surrounding residents, roads, properties, vegetation or heritage items.

6 CONCLUSION

The Department considers that the additional space provided by the proposed modifications will provide for a more operationally effective development with improvements in energy efficiency and car usage, while still achieving high quality buildings in a landscaped setting.

changes is not considered to detract from the architectural features of the building, compromise its function or bring rise to any additional environmental impact issues.

Height modifications

The modifications also include minor changes to the level of roof eaves with increase of 3.63m to the warehouse office as a reflection of the floor level changes being the greatest. However with an RL65.63 at the roof eaves, this is still notably lower than the warehouse which has increased by 500mm to RL68.22 from RL67.72. The roof eaves of the main office buildings have been amended from RL64.095 to RL64.145, an increase of 50mm. It can be noted that the maximum heights of both the warehouse and office buildings remain consistent with the approval.

When considering both the height and size of these buildings, the increase in level of the roof eaves is not considered to visually alter the height or bulk of the approved building and is therefore considered acceptable.

Increased floor space and environmental impact

An increase of the floor space for the development has come about through the ongoing operational evaluation by Sydney Water and includes extending the warehouse, extending and adding a basement to the office and building a large storage shed.

This extension of the warehouse by 1,582m² is shown on the approved plans as an area of future expansion to accommodate the amalgamation of a regional fabrication team. Sydney Water has decided to bring the amalgamation forward and therefore seeks the additional floor space as part of this modification. The addition will be on approved hard stand area and so will not have any additional impact on vegetation. A larger roof area provides for larger catchment of rainwater for reuse and subsequently less to the stormwater system.

The need for more administrative space as well as detailed design evaluation has brought about the proposed changes to the floor space of the office building. The north and south segments have been extended by 3m, however, they remain set back from the approved roof line and therefore do not result in a change to the footprint of the building. The proposed basement will run the length of the eastern façade and, along with the rainwater tanks originally proposed for this area, will contain storage rooms, a switch room and electrical and mechanical units. It will largely be accommodated in the cavity where the natural ground level falls beneath the approved building, again resulting in no increase to the building footprint and little excavation requirements. Overall, the increase in floor space of the office building is not considered to bring rise to any additional environmental impact issues.

A new storage shed also forms part of the modification. This has come about from users identifying a lack of storage space for equipment and materials for operational requirements. It will also house chlorine stores. This is a normal part of Sydney Water's operational requirements and the Department is satisfied that the operational procedures and manuals dealing with its storage and handling will be complied with on this site. The storage shed will be adjacent to land and sheds which are on the State Heritage Register and will result in the loss of some landscaping, both of these issues are assessed separately in this report.

In total, the floor space ratio has increased from 0.3:1 to 0.328:1. This is considered minor and well within the maximum FSR under the Concept Plan of 1:1. The site coverage is also well below the maximum of 70% specified in the Concept Plan as it will increase from 21% to 26.5%. **The overall increase in floor space and the environmental impacts of this is considered to be minor and acceptable for this development.**

Heritage

A new storage shed is proposed directly adjacent to the western boundary and the two heritage listed sheds. The Draft Design Guidelines for the Business Park specifies that a 20m buffer zone is to be provided to the western boundary and heritage listed sheds.

The new shed will be constructed of similar materials with silver zincalume metal cladding and a grey Colourbond roof. While the maximum height for the new shed is 6.56m, the majority of the building,

3 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Section 75W(2) of the Act provides that a proponent may request the Minister to modify the approval of a project. The Minister's approval is not required if the project as modified will be consistent with the original approval.

The proposed modification seeks to change the terms of the Minister's determination through amendments to the approved plans. Accordingly, the modification will require approval.

Section 75W(3) of the Act provides the Director-General with scope to issue environmental assessment requirements (DGRs) that must be addressed before the consideration by the Minister or his delegate. DGRs have not been issued for the modification as it is considered that its impacts would be minimal and similar to the original proposal.

Section 75W(4) of the Act gives the Minister the authority to modify the approval (with or without conditions) or disapprove the modification. Following consideration of the proposed modification (see below), the Department recommends the modification be approved.

4 CONSULTATION

Pursuant to Section 75X(2)(f) of the Act the Director-General is required to make publicly available requests for modifications of approvals given by the Minister. In accordance with Clause 8G of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000, the request for the modification was placed on the Department's website. Modifications are not required to be publicly exhibited.

5 CONSIDERATION

Design and visual impact

The warehouse extension is consistent in design and materials with the approved building. Furthermore, the location of the extension is not adjacent to or highly visible from residential areas or passing traffic. The office section on the southern elevation will have more of a presence than that approved as the ground floor level has been raised by 1.45m and the roof eaves by 3.63m. However, this is still lower than the warehouse building to which it is connected and will potentially reduce the visual bulk of the building as the office section is more light weight in appearance. In the surrounding context, the extensions are not considered to greatly alter the visual impact of warehouse / office building.

With regard to the main office, the atrium/vent design has changed from a butterfly configuration to a south opening saw tooth configuration. This is a consequence of more detailed design work which concluded that the new design provide for improved internal comfort levels and energy efficiency by reducing direct sunlight entering the building and the heat load that accompanied it during the warmer months. Visually, it is considered to be a minor change to the form of the roof line that will not alter the general architectural style. The width of the structure has also been reduced corresponding to the reduction in width of the central bay of the building. Considering its central location on the roof, these changes in form and size will have minimal effect on the appearance.

While the roofline and the footprint of the office building have not changed, the lengths and widths of the north and south segments have increased. This will increase the volume of this building as well as decrease the staggered appearance of the original design. However, the building design and finish remain the same with the light weight materials, sun shades and vegetation reducing the bulk.

The approved development incorporated a rainwater tank below the timber deck where the natural ground level falls beneath the building. The modification seeks to enclose this area using a painted rendered blockwork. While this material is not consistent with the predominantly metal and glass used for the rest of the building, it is considered an appropriate material considering its partly below ground, set back position under the timber decking, allowing it to better blend with the ground with which it merges. Landscaping of the embankment will also screen this basement level.

The development is not adjacent to residential properties, the proposed increase in scale and bulk will therefore not result in increased overshadowing or privacy issues. Each of the

Stormwater and Civil works

New civil works plans and an erosion and sediment control plan have been submitted to reflect the proposed modifications. A comprehensive construction management plan as detailed in Condition 6 of the approval will ensure excavation and construction activities will not impact surrounding residents, roads, properties, vegetation or heritage items.

6 CONCLUSION

The Department considers that the additional space provided by the proposed modifications will provide for a more operationally effective development with improvements in energy efficiency and car usage, while still achieving high quality buildings in a landscaped setting.

7 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Director-General as a delegate of the Minister approve the modifications as detailed in this report and in doing so sign the attached Modification Approval under Section 75W (Modification of Minister's Approval) of Part 3A of the Act at **Tag A**.

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Appendix 1

The detailed changes to the approved proposal are:

Office Building

- Entire building moved east by 1.2m.
- North segment extended east and south segment extended west by 3m.
- Central bay width decreased by 0.5m.
- Internal layout amendments.
- Minor floor level changes.
- Roof design amended and roof eaves level increased by 50mm.

Basement

- Basement level added to the office building principally for store rooms, plant rooms and rainwater tanks.

Warehouse

- Warehouse extended north by 25m.
- 50mm rise in floor level.
- Roof eaves level increased by 0.5m.

Warehouse office

- The ramp has been deleted and a lift added and internal layout amended.
- 1.45m rise of the ground floor level and the first floor level
- 3.63m rise in the roof eaves level
- Precast concrete based added to elevations

Storage shed

- New storage facility added to the north western boundary
- Maximum height 6.56m. GFA: 286m²

Site

- Concrete storage bin and truck wash layout amended
- Above ground water tanks added to north of site entrance.
- External plant north of office building increased from 6.0m x 20.0m to 8.0m x 27.9m

Car parking

- Car and truck / trailer layout altered and accessible car spaces included.
- Number of car parking spaces reduced by 23.
- Number of truck parking spaces increased by 4.

Landscaping

- Landscaping amended to accommodate layout changes.

Stormwater and Civil works

- More detailed civil works, stormwater and sediment control plans consistent with layout changes and reflecting more detailed construction design.