

Appendix C – Architectural Design Statement on Proposed Modifications

Architectural Design Statement

Project:	College of Fine Arts (CoFA)
S75W Application Submitted For:	Building F and Courtyard
Statement Created on:	8 th February 2011
Report Created by:	Mr. Ross Styles

Introduction

The Architectural design of Building F and the new central courtyard of the College of Fine Arts (COFA) at UNSW have been further developed and refined in response to adjustments to the current client brief and changes to funding allocation priorities. These adjustments maintain the key design concepts of the original Part 3A application and the AIA endorsed competition winning scheme announced in August 2007 for COFA.

COFA is one of Australia's premier art and design institutions. The proposed redevelopment of the campus includes:

- The construction of new purpose-built teaching and research accommodation.
- The provision of a high quality gallery which will provide a venue for important contemporary exhibitions of art and design.
- The enhancement of the campus in terms of amenity and engagement with its surrounding environment and community.

The functional brief calls for large volumetric, spatial and servicing requirements with a high degree of flexibility and functionality to be delivered within a fixed programme and budget.

The site is highly visible and recognised as forming an established cultural precinct including an art gallery open to the public and art and design educational facilities. The redevelopment therefore enjoys a significant public profile and the level of UNSW and public expectation for this redevelopment is high.

The functional and aesthetic requirements for teaching and viewing works of art are significant and necessitate a high level of design as well as integrated engineering services that provide optimum environmental conditions.

Key Objectives

The key objectives of the project include:

- Re-orientation of the Campus address to Oxford St and the emerging South Eastern City Cultural Corridor.
- Re-focusing the Campus on a central courtyard as an active social and circulation space.
- Maximisation of useable floor space on a small site which is constrained by existing buildings.
- Provision of technology and infrastructure essential to support the College's activities that cannot be adequately integrated into the existing building stock.
- Enhancement of the Campus experience for students, staff and visitors while respecting the external community.
- Respect for the existing heritage buildings and structures on the site.

Overall Proposal

The configuration and built form of the proposed redevelopment is a result of the requirements of the site specific DCP (Part G South Sydney DCP 1997) which applies to the campus. This DCP provides controls for maximum building envelopes, an optimal pattern of buildings and open spaces and distribution of uses.

Architecture
Urban Design
Planning
Interior Architecture

Architectus Sydney Pty Ltd
ABN 11 098 489 448
Level 3 341 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia
T 61 2 8252 8400
F 61 2 8252 8600
sydney@architectus.com.au
www.architectus.com.au

Auckland
Brisbane
Melbourne
Shanghai
Sydney

The demolition of Buildings B and C (South) and the redevelopment of Building D will create a central courtyard to contain campus outdoor activity and provide on-site circulation.

The alterations and additions to Building F consist of:

- Rebuilding of part of the lower level (Basement Level) for a new lobby, gallery and café, which will provide a new entrance point to the campus at street level.
- Alterations to internal layouts of several floors to accommodate new studios and a range of teaching facilities.
- An additional floor (Level 4), to accommodate new postgraduate studio spaces, research areas and a terrace. This additional floor will be set back from the building edges to minimise visual impact from other areas of the campus and the adjoining neighbourhood.

The proposal appropriately focuses the main access to basement parking and loading facilities to the Greens Road boundary. The existing vehicle access point to the basement parking is proposed to be moved one structural bay to the North and the existing Building F loading dock facilities are proposed to be retained in their current location. The latter provides servicing to the existing art lift and a new pedestrian/art lift in the Northern section of the building.

With the re-orientation of the campus towards Oxford Street, the main pedestrian access to the new gallery component (in Building F) and main central courtyard is from the Napier Street Road Closure zone. This is adjacent to Greens Road and visible from Oxford Street. All buildings have entries located off the central courtyard. These will focus activity into the core of the campus and enliven this central space. This will also reduce circulation outside the perimeter of the campus and minimise potential noise to the adjacent communities.

The design approach is to deliver appropriate and high quality facilities within the given budget. Significant importance has been placed on the architecture creating a special place and inviting public participation. The architecture will provide a framework for the cultural interface between the public and art, and between art and teaching.

The design objective is to deliver an outstanding university educational facility and gallery to be enjoyed by those who make, teach, arrange and exhibit art and create an environment which will invite people to visit and engage. It will be a facility that will:

- Be fit for purpose and planned and constructed for longevity.
- Clearly state its public address.
- Be a sensitive and appropriate neighbour (visually and operationally) to its adjacent residential community.
- Be a learning place for its students, a creative, inspiring work environment for resident artists and a meeting place for people from a range of cultures embracing all forms of art.
- Be adaptable and versatile.
- Be a secure, effective and enduring building in fabric and finish, appropriate to the times, its function and the special requirements of the climate and the site.
- Make a positive contribution to its immediate environment and open out, embrace and invite participation by the community.

The gallery as a public institution contributes to the experience of the city and offers a collective experience of enlightenment, enquiry, creativity and emotional responses.

The architecture does not present itself as 'the building as art', rather it is 'the art of building' that is considered more important. Interpreting the underpinning ethos of the school with the tectonic of glass, concrete and metal provide a rare opportunity to explore the materiality of both. The architecture and the aesthetic have been informed by a close working relationship with the UNSW College of Fine Arts and consultation with the local community.

Section 75W Adjustments to Building F and the Central Courtyard

The proposed adjustments to the current approved design for Building F and the adjacent central courtyard are indicated in detail on the accompanying architectural drawings and in the tables within the report. The key proposed adjustments include the following:

- The new building facade design responds to the confirmation that the trees located in the Napier Street Road Closure zone are to be retained.
- Adjustments to the North façade and entrances respond to there being no Sydney City Council re-development design / timeframe for the Napier Street Road Closure zone.
- This revised facade focuses visual interaction with the building / visual stimulus to Oxford Street via a new canopy element with integral digital screen located 1 Level above the street at the corner of Greens Road and Napier Street.
- The new canopy provides amenity for users at the gallery entrance and shading to the café.
- The proposed digital screen will display student artwork and/or information on current exhibitions and artworks.
- A new canopy element is proposed for the loading dock to facilitate use by larger trucks which cannot currently fit into the existing loading dock to unload under cover.
- The terraces on upper levels at the North end of the building are retained and extended. In contrast to the current approved scheme, they are not enclosed or hidden behind a multi-storey screen. This allows greater student connection to outside, takes advantage of the panoramic views to the harbour and also allows greater access to natural ventilation and breezes.
- The art gallery is more strongly represented within the façade design. It is given its own identity and expression within the overall façade configuration.
- A new large lift serves all floors and improves accessibility for occupants and the movement of artwork between all levels.
- It is proposed to delete the lightwell previously located at the South end of existing Building C and replace it with landscaped planters. This will provide enhanced exposure of the South façade of this heritage building.
- Access to the central courtyard is improved by a reduction in level changes and closer proximity of the courtyard stairs to Napier Street.
- The proposed colour scheme breaks up the mass of building F and provides direct continuity with the colour scheme already approved for building D. The palette and pattern of colours for the major panels within the facade is generated from a range of greys of varying tone. These are demonstrated on the sample board provided.
- Materials proposed are simple, honest in appearance and of low maintenance. The location and extent of the proposed external materials are clearly shown and noted on the building elevation drawings and on the sample board.

A key objective of the proposed colour scheme for Building F is to break up the mass and structured aesthetic of this industrial style building and relate more sympathetically with the scale of the existing heritage buildings. The new facade alignments, the colours and the materials do not affect the heritage qualities of Buildings A and C.