

# RNSH

Modification to Project Approval  
– Community Health Building

## TOWN PLANNING REPORT

MP08\_00172

Section 75W Modification  
Community Health Building

Prepared for Infrashore | November 2009



InfraShore

urbis

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A	MP08_00172 Instrument of Approval and reduced copy of approved plans
Appendix B	Car Park and Loading Dock – Compliance Report
Appendix C	Reduced copy of revised architectural drawings and photomontages
Appendix D	Shadow Diagrams



# 1 INTRODUCTION

This planning report accompanies an application made under Section 75W of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 with respect to a proposed modification to Major Project Approval MP08\_00172 – Royal North Shore Acute Hospital and Community Health Building. The proposed modifications relate specifically to design amendments to the approved Community Health Building.

The site plan below indicates the location of the Community Health Building on the eastern side of the site with a frontage to Herbert Street.



Figure 1: Site Plan, (as approved).

Refer to Appendix A for copy of the Instrument of Approval and a reduced set of approved plans.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Aside from the design parameters contained within the Concept Approval for the site, the planning of the L-shaped building form was largely determined by the relationship between the operational, clinical and physical requirements of several Community Health user groups and related functional spaces, those being:

- Aboriginal Health
- Drug & Alcohol
- Mental Health
- Child & Family Services
- Aged Care Services & NCIS
- Renal Services
- Health Promotion

- Breast Screen Services
- Sexual Health
- Sexual Assault Services
- Dental Services
- Entry and common facilities

Subsequent to the approval of the Project Application, further in-depth user group consultation has occurred. As a result of this process, re-arrangements to several functional departments within the building have been identified to maximise service delivery and functional efficiencies. To achieve this, and to avoid the splitting of functional areas, modifications to the internal layout and changes to the upper levels of the building envelope are proposed.

The modified scheme, albeit a preliminary version but one which has not since changed in substance, was introduced to NSW Department of Planning staff on 21 September 2009, who advised that Section 75W of the Act would be the appropriate mechanism to facilitate the proposed changes.

Construction of the building is underway and the proposed modifications necessitate approval prior to the next important stage of the construction/design - the structural framework of the building.



## 2 PROPOSAL

The proposed modifications relate to the design of the building and include the following main elements:

- Redistribution of the upper level massing of the building including changes to Levels 5 and 6 and plant levels.

Level 5, under the approved scheme, occupies the full building footprint and Level 6 only two thirds of the length of the building, in the revised design both Level 5 and Level 6 are of similar size, setback from floors below from the southern building line. The figures below provide a comparison between the massing of the building as revised (above) and as approved (below).



Figure 2 (above): Proposed Eastern Elevation. Figure 3 (below): Approved Eastern Elevation.



- Rationalisation of the basement and car parking layout to create a loading bay area at a level above the main basement car park, separating the two functions.
- Changes to facade treatments including new windows across southern elevation at Levels 2-4 and the removal of floor to ceiling glazing across link section on Herbert Street elevation between Levels 2 to 7.
- Internal changes to reflect revised floor plates and requirements of user groups.
- Other minor modifications as indicated on the plans accompanying the application.

In terms of modifying the instrument of approval, it is proposed that MP08\_00172 be modified by the approval of the architectural drawings accompanying this application, as prepared by Cox Richardson, dated 27/10/2009. Reduced copies of these plans are provided at **Appendix C**.



## 3 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

### 3.1 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Under Section 75W of the Act, the Minister may provide environmental assessment requirements to be addressed the proponent prior to any application under this Part being determined.

In this respect, and to assist the Department in the consideration of this matter, it is proposed that for the purposes of this assessment that those Director General Requirements, as they applied to the original Project Application and as relevant to the current proposal, be re-considered.

In this respect, the following relevant environmental assessment criteria have been adopted:

- Concept Plan, including any relevant Commitments, Terms of Approval and Conditions.
- Justification for the proposal in light of any potential environmental impacts and whether or not the project is in the public interest.
- Urban Design and Architecture.
- Privacy.
- Overshadowing.
- Car park and loading dock design.

During pre-lodgement consultation with Department staff, it was requested that any future application give consideration to issues related to height; overshadowing; privacy and the architectural treatment of the building and its presentation to Herbert Street. The scope of this assessment includes all such criteria.

### 3.2 ASSESSMENT

#### 3.2.1 Concept Plan

The proposed modified scheme has no significant effect on the degree to which the Community Health Building is consistent with the Concept Approval.

The building height is increased slightly as a result of the rationalisation to the roof top plant and in light of other envelope changes. The revised scheme has an uppermost building height of RL114.6, an increase of 1.6m, which continues to comply with the Height Control Plan, under the Concept Approval

The Height Control Plan, an extract of which is provided below, indicates a maximum height of between RL120 and RL130 at this location. No changes in height are proposed along the Herbert Street frontage, except the street wall height at Levels 5 and 6, which comfortably remain within the RL110 maximum. It is noted that the maximum height for building between the height contours shown should be based on a transitionary line between these contours. This height envelope has been calculated and added to the elevational drawings by the project architects.



Figure 4: Extract Concept Approval Height Control Plan.

The footprint of the building does not change as a result of the proposed modifications.

### 3.2.2 Justification for the modifications

As referred to in the introduction of this report, the proposed modifications stem from a desire to achieve the best functional capability of the building. This will lead to improved health care and the more efficient provision of such care. The proposed improvements to the building are therefore considered to be firmly in the public interest.

The proposed changes to the Project Approval may be justified for the reasons:

- The absence of significant adverse environmental impacts related to the revised scheme;
- The proposal remains consistent with the original Concept Approval and indeed, the current Project Approval;
- The resultant improvements to health service delivery will be firmly in the public interest.

### 3.2.3 Urban Design and Architecture

*The architects of the building, Cox Richardson, have provided the following design statement to provide further insight into the design rationale and how the revised scheme responds to its context:*

*"The proposed revision maintains the key urban design features of the Project Application:*

- *L shaped building form with similar overall height, massing and GFA*
- *retention of pedestrian and vehicular entry points and through-site link*
- *provides a strong street presence to Herbert Street with a clear, welcoming entry.*

*The re-arrangement of the southern extent of Level 5 and Level 6 serves to further improve the overall building massing, by creating a gradation to lower scale towards the Mortuary and Eileen Street.*

*The revised design retains all elements of the Project Application architectural palette.*

*The building now “turns the corner” in a stronger manner at the north and south facades. This is achieved by the use of blade fins which provide a crispness and clarity to the building forms. The core elements on the west elevation to Red Road have window elements for visual relief of the masonry masses.*

*The proposed massing has been improved as a result of the Level 5 and Level 6 changes. By setting back the two upper floors, the Herbert street façade is composed of the following horizontal layers:*

- *face brickwork plinth up to Level 1*
- *middle layer comprising Levels 2, 3 and 4*
- *upper layer comprising Level 5 and 6*

*The façade retains the dominant horizontal emphasis, achieved through the simple pattern of band windows and spandrels. A subtle colour change in the opaque window in-fills reinforces the horizontality and layering effect.*

*The main Herbert Street entry is highly visible and inviting, leading into the generous double-height of the foyer.*

*Overall, the building on all facades enjoys an improved modulation of planes, which minimizes the apparent bulk.”*

The presentation of the building to Herbert Street continues to be highly articulated, adopting a palette of colours and materials similar to that approved. However, unlike the approved scheme which was divided vertically by a glazed section, the revised scheme emphasises the strong horizontal articulation of the building by continuing the levels of glazing across this elevation and bringing better rhythm to the façade. Both the lower section of the Herbert Street elevation (Levels 2-4) and the upper setback portion (Levels 5-7), like the other elevations of the building, are framed by protruding elements with sheet metal cladding which provide improved definition and legibility to the building elements (refer to photomontages at Appendix C).

### **3.2.4 Amenity Impacts**

#### **Privacy**

The consideration of potential overlooking impacts is relevant to the assessment due to the introduction of glazing across the southern elevation at Levels 2-4. The rooms associated with these new windows are to be used generally for administrative purposes. The southern perspective looks over existing hospital buildings to the south. Sight lines do exist from these new windows to the western building line of the residential flat building on the east side of Herbert Street, however given the physical separation of the openings and that windows, which are in greater proximity to these buildings, already form part of the Project Approval, any impacts related to the loss of privacy are considered minimal.

The introduction of these new windows will provide greater levels of internal amenity to users, will result in better energy efficiency and will better articulate this façade.

The removal of the floor to ceiling windows facing Herbert Street are as a result of the provision of rooms along this section and all upper levels. This will further limit any perceived overlooking or light spill impacts which were raised as potential impacts during the public notification of the Project Application.

### Overshadowing

To assess any potential impact of the proposed revisions, shadow modelling has been carried out by C3D Interactive Pty Ltd. A full set of shadow diagrams are provided at Appendix D.

Key considerations with respect to overshadowing and solar access with respect to this project include solar access to open space, and potential overshadowing to residential uses on the eastern side of Herbert Street.

These matters are addressed as follows:

#### 1. *Solar Access to Open Space*

The proposed modifications will have no impact on Gore Hill Park or any other public open space areas with respect to overshadowing. The Community Health Building is located to the eastern side of the site and whilst in proximity to some garden areas within the heritage precinct, the revisions to the Community Health Building will not affect this space. Refer to the extract from material prepared by C3Di below, which shows the worst case shadow (mid-winter) at 9am (Figure 5).

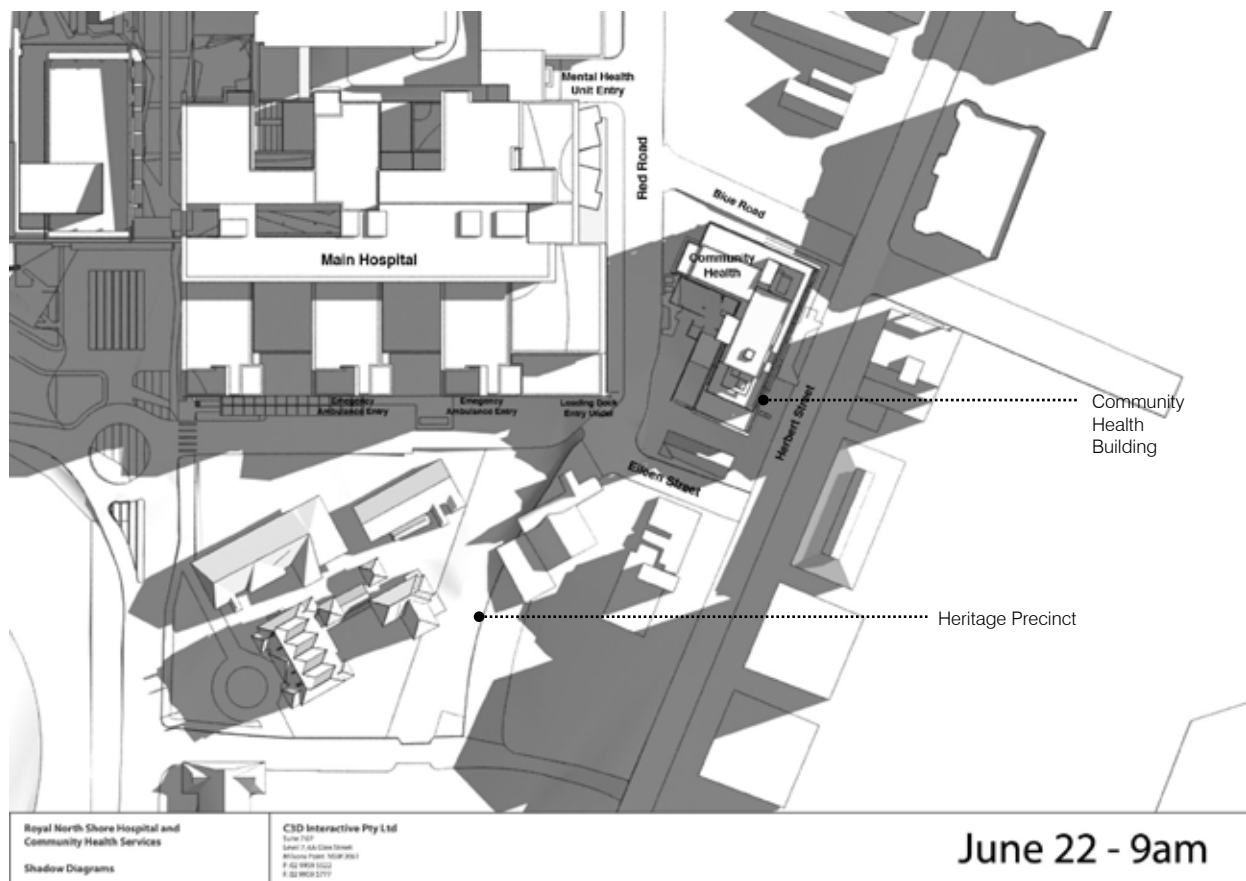


Figure 5: Mid winter Noon shadow.

#### 2. *Overshadowing on surrounding uses*

The greatest potential for overshadowing on surrounding uses occurs during the late afternoon at mid-winter, with respect to the residential units to the east/south-east of the Community Health Building on the opposite side of Herbert Street.

To demonstrate the actual impact, further modelling has been carried out and for ease of assessment these further drawings are provided below along with those submitted with the Preferred Project Application for comparison.

Figures 6 and 7 below provide a comparison of the shadow cast on the units to the east of the development, as approved, and as proposed to be modified.



Figure 6: Approved development mid-winter 3pm



Figure 7: Proposed modified scheme mid-winter 3pm

The most significant change to the resultant shadows cast by the modified building arises late in the afternoon during mid-winter. Around this time there will additional shadow cast on the lower scale building located directly opposite the Mortuary Building. The approved building has the effect of casting shadow across the full front elevation of this building. The revised scheme will result in further shadow across its roof which is understood to contain sky-lights, which are already partly shadowed by the residential building to the north at this time.

The proposed modified scheme is considered to be satisfactory in terms of potential shadow impacts for the following reasons:

- No additional shadow shall be cast on open space and significant landscaped areas;
- The minor additional shadowing to the lower scale residential block is not considered to be significant in nature. The additional shadow will occur only at around 3pm mid-winter being the worst case scenario. As shown below, during the equinoxes and summer, such shadows to the residential uses will be non-existent.



Figure 8: Proposed modified scheme Equinox 3pm



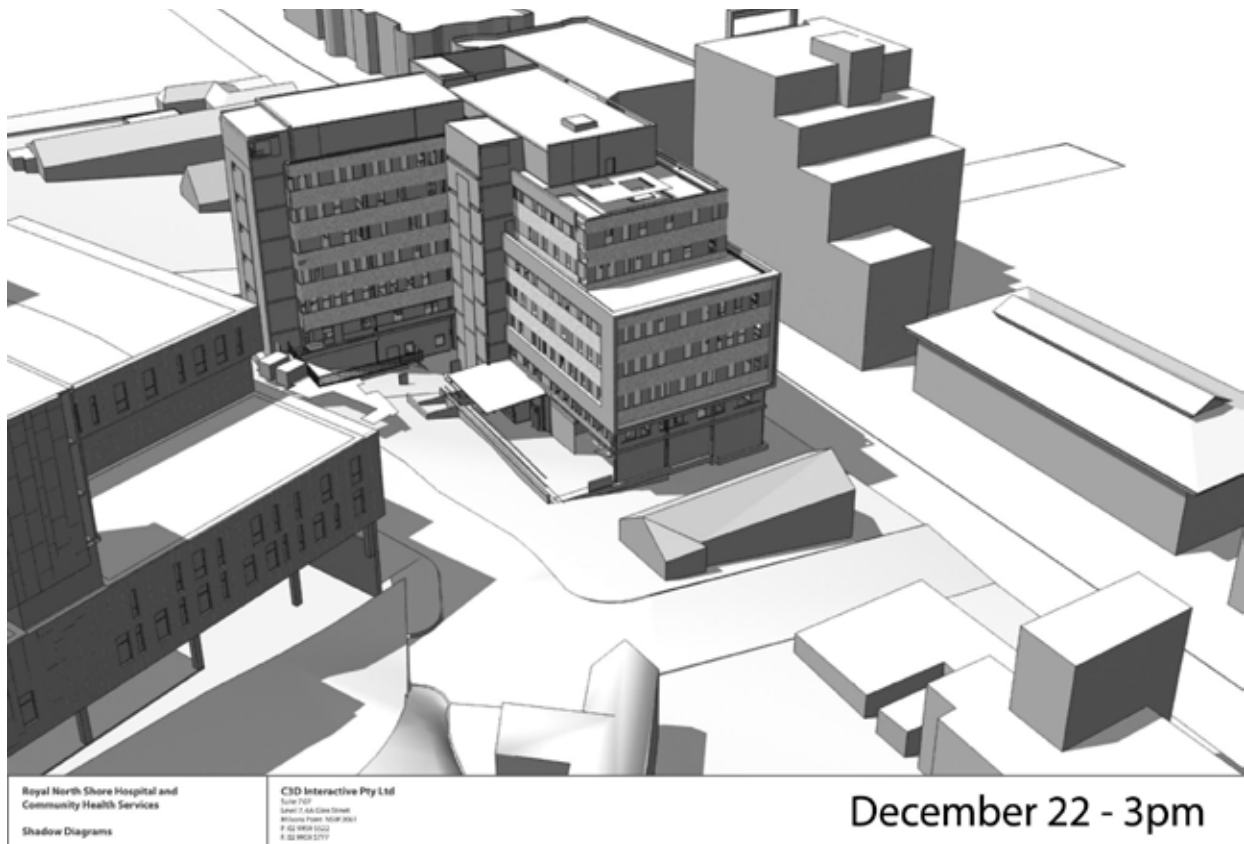


Figure 9: Proposed modified scheme Mid Summer 3pm

- The residential uses opposite will still continue to receive 3 hours unfettered solar access which is consistent with accepted AMCORD standards.
- Overshadowing has been minimised by:
  - Finishing the street wall height of the proposed Community Health Facility below the permitted height limit for the site;
  - Increasing building separation in proportion to height;
  - The provision of a 4m setback along Herbert Street; and
  - Allowing the building to follow the natural topography of the site.
- Siting the building further to the South, as previously envisaged under the Concept Approval, would have potentially resulted in more units being affected in this respect.

Overall, the proposal is considered to be satisfactory in terms of overshadowing impacts.



### 3.2.5 Loading dock design

The basement of the building has been revised to provide separate car park and loading dock facilities. This has been achieved by the proposed construction of a ramp up from Herbert Street level to an area at the south west portion of the building at ground floor level.

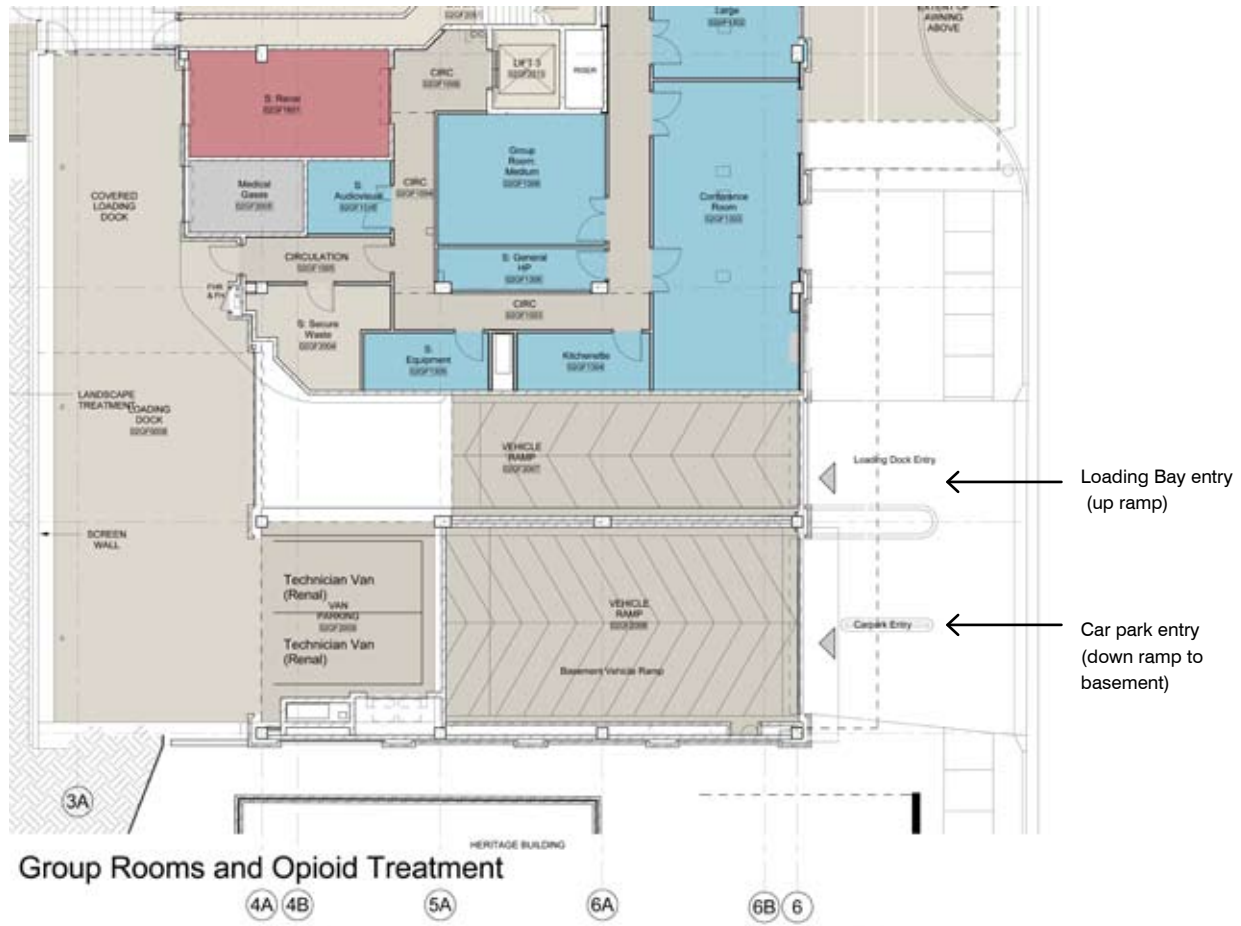


Figure 6: Extract Ground Floor Plan showing vehicular entry points.

Aside for the operational benefits of having deliveries made at this level, the separation of car parking and loading functions is considered to be a safer outcome.

Halcrow MWT, has prepared a Compliance Report with respect to the revised schemes ability to satisfy AS2890.1 (Class 3 for car parking at hospitals and medical centres). The report, a copy of which is provided at Appendix B, concludes that the revised car park and basement design complies with the relevant standards under AS2890.1. In order to improve circulation the report recommends that mirrors be erected to improve sightlines and that, depending on allocation arrangements, once full, a sign should display such information at the entry to the car park.

## 4 CONCLUSION

The proposed modifications stem from further detailed consultation with user groups and a desire to optimise the functional capabilities of these groups and how they interact with each other.

The modified design continues to comply with the relevant provisions of the Concept Approval and is generally consistent with the current Project Approval. No significant adverse environmental impacts are expected as a result of the modified design.

The proposal is considered to be firmly with in the public interest and it is recommended that approval be granted to the proposed revisions.

