

13 February 2009

Mr Sam Haddad
Director-General
Department of Planning
23-33 Bridge Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Haddad,

**St Vincent's & Mater Health Sydney - Darlinghurst Research Precinct
Preliminary Environmental Assessment**

1 Introduction

In December 2008, correspondence was sent to the Minister for Planning requesting the following:

- Confirmation of both the Garvan St Vincent's Campus Cancer Centre (GSVCCC) and the University of NSW Virology components of the Darlinghurst Research Precinct as 'Major Projects' pursuant to *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005*; and
- Authorisation to prepare and submit a 'Concept Plan' for the Darlinghurst Research Precinct pursuant to Section 75M to Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

It is anticipated that confirmation of these requests will be received shortly. In the interim, I am writing on behalf of our client, St Vincent's & Mater Health Sydney, to request that individual Director-General Environmental Assessments Requirements (DGEARs) are prepared and issued for the following projects:

- Concept Plan for the St Vincent's & Mater Health Darlinghurst Research Precinct;
- Major Project Application for Garvan St Vincent's Campus Cancer Centre Site, including an early works package comprising demolition and site preparation; and
- Major Project Application for University of NSW Virology Building, including an early works package comprising demolition and site preparation.

2 Site Details

The Darlinghurst Research Precinct comprises most of the street block bounded by Victoria, Liverpool, West and Burton Streets, Darlinghurst, immediately north of the St Vincent's Hospital. The context of the Precinct is identified in Figure 1.

It does not include the Green Park Hotel at 360 Liverpool Street (on the corner of Liverpool and Victoria Streets) or the two storey Victorian dwelling house at 431 Liverpool Street (on the corner of Liverpool and West Streets). The extent of the Precinct is identified in Figure 2.

The Precinct currently accommodates the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute (VCCRI), St Vincent's Centre for Applied Medical Research and the University of NSW via the prestigious National Centre in HIV Epidemiology, which is currently housed in the St Vincent's Hospital Medical Centre. In addition there is also a number of smaller buildings and some vacant land. The entire Precinct is owned by the Trustees of St Vincent's.

Figure 1 – Context of Darlinghurst Research Precinct

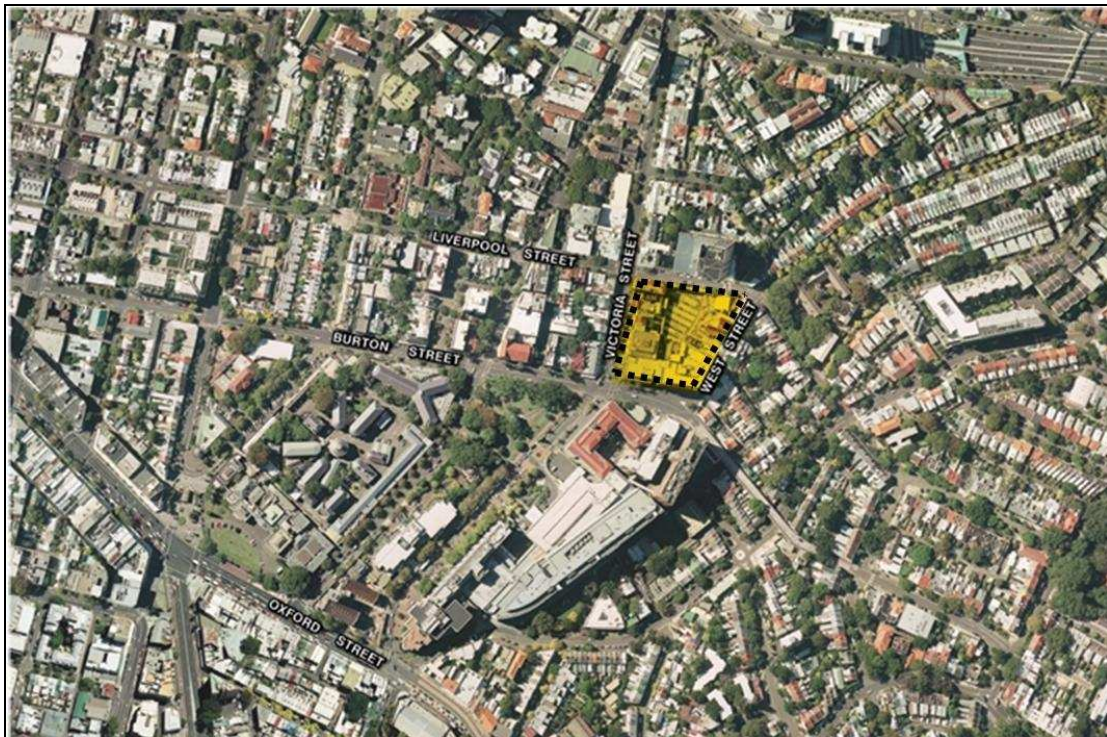
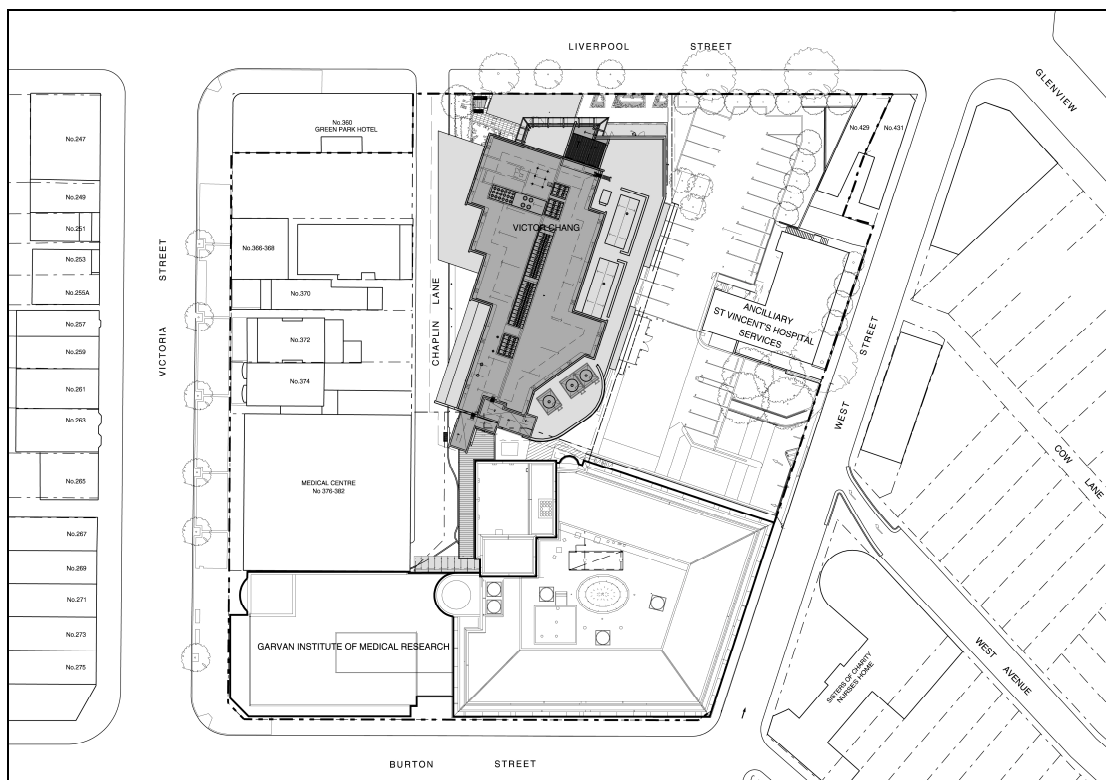


Figure 2 – Extent of Darlinghurst Research Precinct



3 Description of the Project

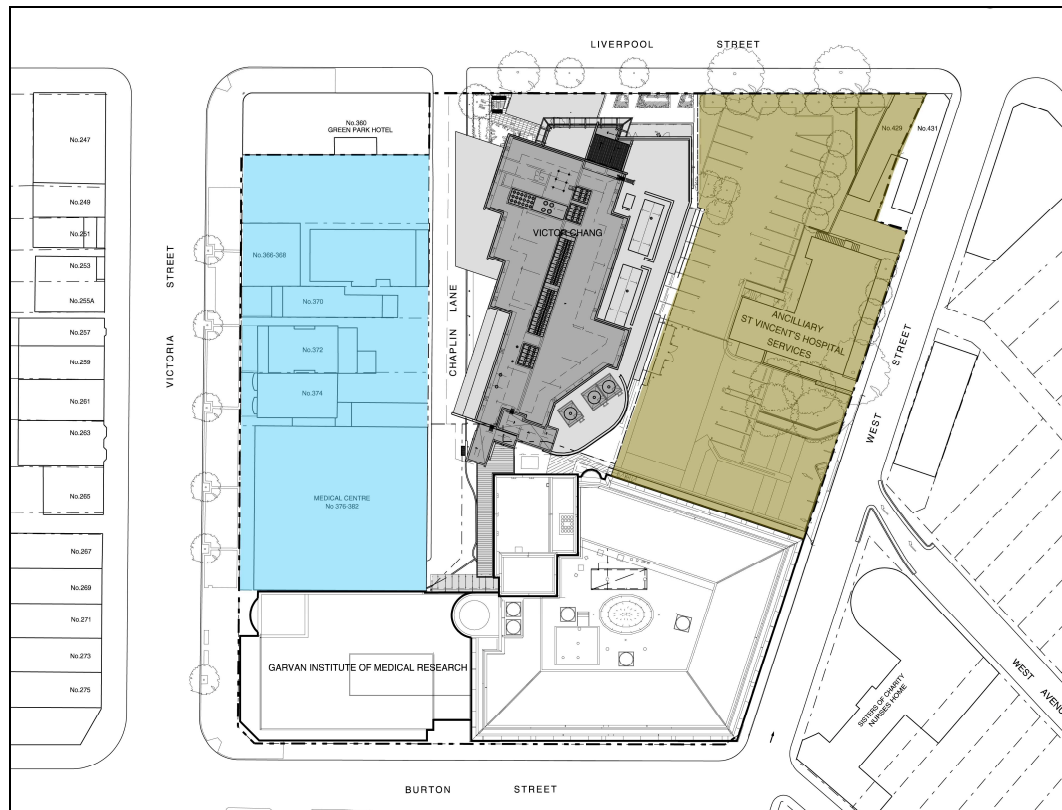
3.1 Overview

The Project seeks to create a globally competitive hub of medical research centred around the St Vincent's Hospital. A key objective of the project is the optimisation of opportunities for 'translational' medical outcomes arising from the co-location and functional and physical integration of a range of associated clinical, research and ancillary facilities.

It will draw on the collaborative opportunities presented by the immediate proximity of the existing St Vincent's Hospital, Garvan Institute and Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, and involves the creation of an integrated precinct of health research facilities, comprising those existing facilities and the new facilities for the GSVCCC and UNSW Virology as indicated in Figure 3.

The proposed application format will comprise an overarching Concept Plan for the entire Precinct, in addition to separate project applications for each of the GSVCCC and UNSW Virology components of the Project.

Figure 3 – Location of GSVCCC and UNSW Virology Sites within Darlinghurst Research Precinct



KEY: GSVCCC – Blue, UNSW Virology - Green

The approximate breakdown of 'Gross Floor Area' anticipated for each component of the Precinct is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 – Darlinghurst Research Precinct Floor Space Schedule

	Existing		Proposed		
	Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute	Garvan Institute	Garvan St Vincent's Campus Cancer Centre	UNSW Virology	TOTAL PRECINCT
Approximate Floor Space	9,354m ² (8 Storeys)	17,157m ² (8 Storeys)	12,000m ² (11 storeys)	11,000m ² (11 storeys)	49,511 m ² (8-11 storeys)

The GSVCCC and UNSW Virology will be functionally and physically integrated with the existing facilities on site to optimise collaboration within a single integrated research precinct. This integration will be provided through public and private internal circulation networks, specific functional connections/links, common indoor and outdoor spaces, shared conference / meeting rooms and amenities, which will foster collaboration between disciplines and spark ongoing creativity and dialogue. Car parking, utilities and building services, such as an electrical supply and loading facilities are also intended to be shared.

3.2 Car Parking and Vehicular Access

Access to the Precinct will principally be provided by a left in/left out access point on West Street, with a secondary left in/left out access point via Chaplin Lane. In addition to car parking spaces generated by the new research buildings in accordance with the requirements of South Sydney Development Control Plan No.11, additional parking is envisaged for existing hospital staff/visitors, alleviating existing pressure on surrounding residential streets. Notwithstanding this additional parking, resultant staff to parking rates will remain significantly lower than the comparable inner urban hospitals at Prince of Wales and Royal North Shore.

3.3 Project Staging

The Concept Plan is proposed by St Vincent & Mater Health Sydney, the owner of the precinct. However, individual project applications will be made by GSVCCC and UNSW Virology. Concept planning of the precinct is well advanced and design of the GSVCCC building is ready to commence. Given the advanced nature of the GSVCCC project, the project application will include an early works component for demolition and site preparation to ensure timely commencement of development.

It is envisaged that submission of the Concept Plan will be followed shortly thereafter (or possibly accompanied by) the submission of a project application for the GSVCCC building. At the current time, planning of the UNSW Virology building is less advanced. Given the above timing, we request that Separate DG's EARs be provided for the Concept Plan and each of the two project applications.

4 Planning Considerations

The key planning instruments and policies that currently apply to the Project are:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005.
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.
- South Sydney Local Environmental Plan 1998.
- Sydney Metropolitan Strategy
- Draft Inner Sydney Subregional Strategy.
- Sustainable Sydney 2030 Strategic Plan.

4.1 State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005

All components of the project conform to the Group 19 (Medical Research and Development Facility) class of development. Furthermore, as both components of the Project each have an approximate capital investment value in the order of \$100 million, each project exceeds the \$15 million threshold.

The Minister for Planning has therefore been separately requested to confirm that both the Garvan St Vincent's Campus Cancer Centre (GSVCCC) and the University of NSW Virology components of the Darlinghurst Research Precinct as 'Major Projects' pursuant to *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005*.

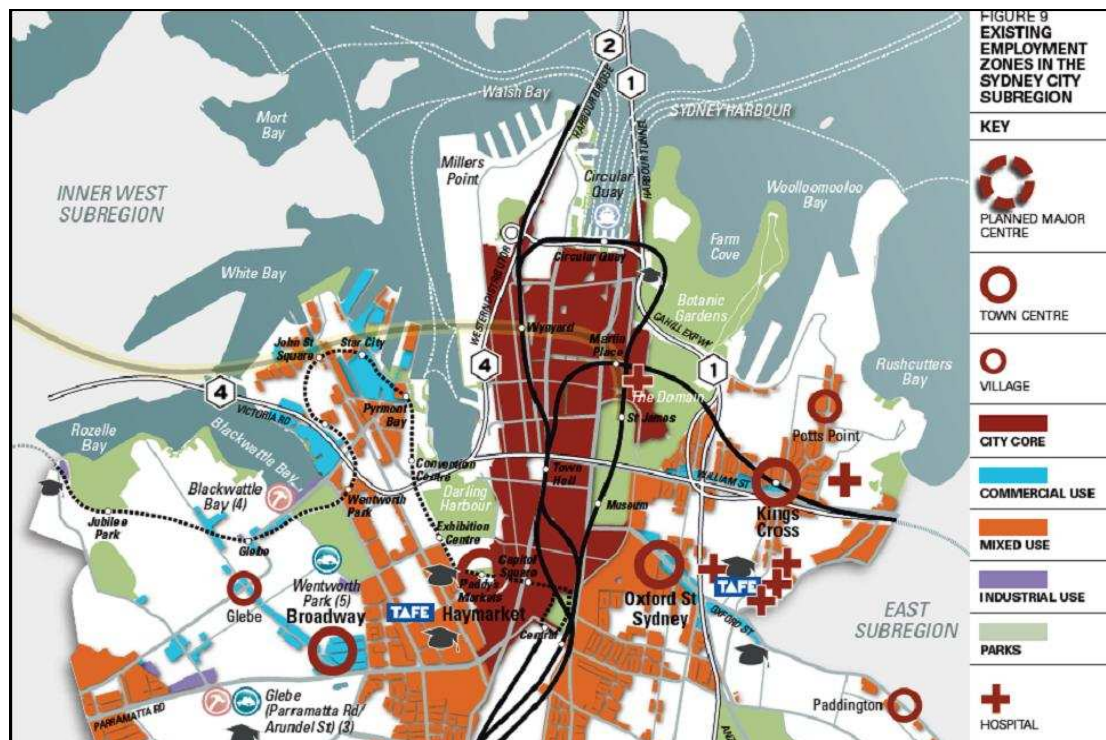
4.2 South Sydney Local Environmental Plan 1998

South Sydney Local Environmental Plan 1998 (SSLEP) is the principle statutory planning instrument applying to the site. Under the SSLEP, the Precinct is zoned 5b Special Use (Hospital). This zone permits 'hospitals' with consent, including associated research facilities.

4.3 Sydney Metropolitan Strategy and Draft Inner Sydney Subregional Strategy

The Precinct is recognised in both the Metropolitan and the Draft Subregional Strategies as the 'East Sydney Health Precinct' and a 'Cooperative Research Centre' (refer to Figures 5). In order to deliver the specific outcomes envisaged by these strategies, the Project seeks to create a globally competitive hub of medical research centred around the 'magnet infrastructure' of the St Vincent's Hospital.

Figure 4 – Draft Inner Sydney Subregional Strategy Employment Zones



The Draft Subregional Strategy recognises the St Vincent's Hospital, Garvan Institute, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and the National Centre for HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research as **"a world class health services cluster"**. The strategy contains the following actions that are relevant to this Precinct (emphasis added):

- A2.1.3 – **"Within the subregion, world class health, medical and biotechnology research activities are located in a cluster around the St Vincent's Hospital in Darlinghurst..."**.
- A2.2 – **"For the Department of Health, Department of State and Regional Development and Department of Planning to promote the City East and Sydney Education and Health precincts as centres of excellence in biomedical research and development"**.

- A2.3 – “Magnet infrastructure is generally an asset in the built environment that attracts activities to co-locate with it to form an industry cluster”.

4.4 Sustainable Sydney 2030 Strategic Plan

Part of the vision for the City of Sydney in 2030 Strategic Plan is for it to remain Australia’s most significant global city containing premium spaces for business activities and high quality jobs to nurture, attract and retain global talent. One of the key strategic directions identified in the Plan is for Sydney to remain a globally competitive and innovative city through investment in strategic economic infrastructure and amenities.

The Project is broadly consistent with the vision and relevant strategic directions contained in the Plan as it will provide a hub of medical research that will be recognised internationally, which is critical in attracting and keeping world class talent.

5 Likely Issues and Preliminary Environmental Assessment

It is likely that the Projects will need to be assessed having regard to the following issues, at a minimum.

5.1 Compliance and Consistency with Planning Controls and Policies

The proposed hospital related research uses are permissible in the 5(a) (Hospital) zone and the project is consistent with the strategic planning policy context.

There are generally no built forms applicable to the Precinct and the proposed building form will need to be justified in an urban design and architectural sense. A detailed assessment of this issue will need to be undertaken as part of the Environmental Assessment process.

5.2 Transport, Traffic Access and Parking

A transport management and impact assessment will be prepared that addresses traffic generation, car parking demand and service and delivery movements as part of the Environmental Assessment process. It will model existing and proposed traffic flows and intersection performance, and will examine the implications of the proposal upon the availability of on-street parking in the locality.

5.3 Heritage

The Precinct includes a heritage item of local significance at 372 Victoria Street and part of the Victoria Street streetscape. It also directly adjoins 360 Liverpool Street (Green Park Hotel), which is also a heritage item of local significance, and is located in the vicinity of various other items and the Barcom Avenue Conservation Area.

Urbis has undertaken a preliminary heritage assessment of the site and its surrounds and has concluded that removal of 372 Victoria Street could be considered without compromising the heritage significance of the area. Furthermore the Project will be designed to respond sympathetically to those heritage items that will be retained, such as the Green Park Hotel, and the prevailing heritage character of Victoria Street and the broader locality.

A Heritage Impact Statement will be included as part of the Environmental Assessment process.

5.4 Solar Access and Overshadowing

The design of buildings in the precinct will have regard to the solar access requirements of neighbouring properties, including particularly the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and surrounding residential properties to the east. A solar access assessment will be undertaken as part of the Environmental Assessment process.

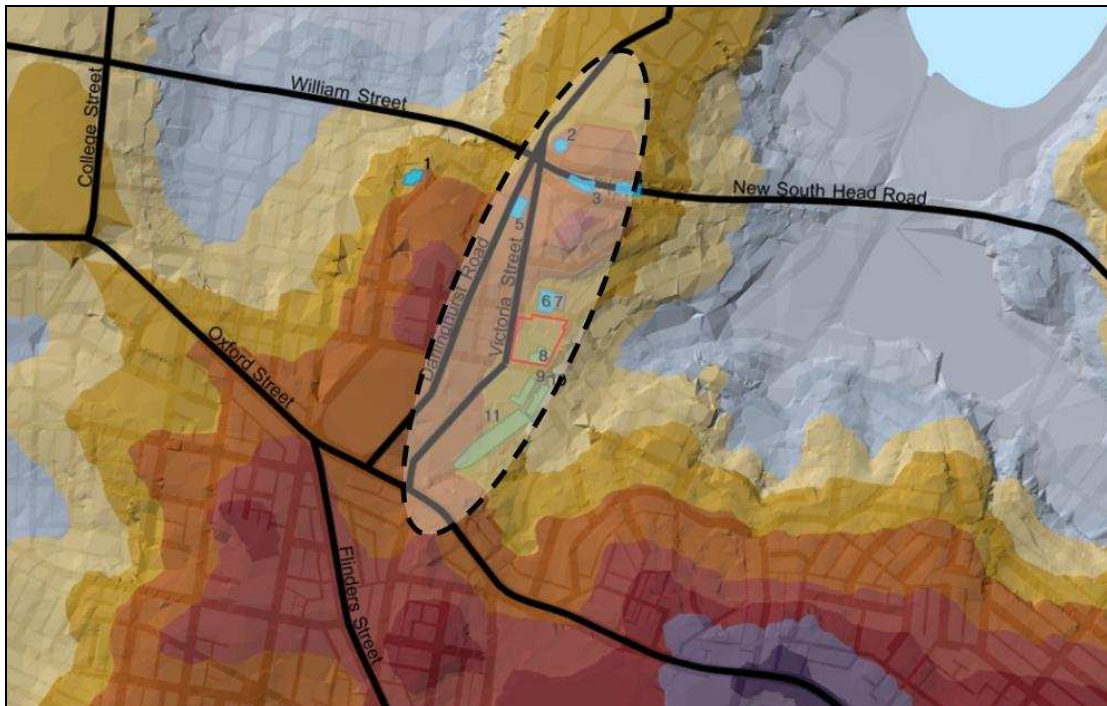
5.5 Infrastructure

The existing developments in the Precinct are serviced for electricity, gas, sewer, stormwater and telecommunications. Any augmentation requirements will be identified as part of the Environmental Assessment process. This will occur in a coordinated fashion via an infrastructure plan, which will also include an assessment and strategy for management of stormwater.

5.6 Urban Form

A key objective of the Project is to create iconic buildings that befit the prestige and international reputation of such a centre of cooperative research excellence, whilst being responsive to its context within a heritage precinct. Building envelopes are proposed to reinforce the skyline characteristics of the Kings Cross ridgeline, as envisaged in the South Sydney Development Control Plan 1997, by providing buildings of variable heights consistent with those buildings existing on the Kings Cross ridgeline (refer to Figure 6 and 7). A more detailed urban design analysis will be undertaken as part of the Environmental Assessment process.

Figure 5 – Kings Cross Ridgeline



KEY: 1- Horizon Apartments 2- Millenium Apartments 3- Elan Apartments 4- Altair Apartments 5- Top of the Town Apartments 6- 320 Liverpool St (Approval) 7- Telstra Exchange 8- O'Brien Building 9- Cahill Building 10- St Vincent's Building

Figure 6 – Kings Cross Ridgeline Urban Form



5.7 Social and Economic Benefits

The Project will have a positive social and economic impact by providing opportunities to develop translational medical research outcomes through partnerships between St Vincent's Hospital, the Garvan Institute and the University of NSW. It will contribute to the international role of Sydney as a centre of research excellence and the cosmopolitan urban context of the locality will assist in attracting and maintaining the highest calibre of research talent.

5.8 Construction Management

Consideration of construction management will be undertaken as part of the Environmental Assessment process and will include:

- Erosion and sediment control measures.
- Site management, including public and pedestrian safety, access points for construction vehicles and storage of materials.
- Construction traffic and noise management.
- Structural risk management for adjoining heritage buildings.
- Staging works, including relocation issues associated with existing uses.

5.9 Waste Management

An assessment of waste management facilities, during both construction and ongoing operation of the project will be undertaken as part of the Environmental Assessment process.

5.10 Mobility and Access

Disabled access within and around the site will be addressed as part of the Environment Assessment in accordance with relevant provisions of the Building Code of Australia and other applicable standards.

5.11 Energy Efficiency

Energy performance measures will be included as part of the Environmental Assessment process to comply with the relevant provisions of the Building Code of Australia. An energy efficiency performance report will be included as part of the proposal.

5.12 Acoustic Impacts

Any noise associated with the completed Project, such as noise from traffic associated with the loading bay and car park access points on West Street, will be assessed as part of the Environmental Assessment process.

6 Consultation

To date, preliminary briefings have been held with internal stakeholders and Department of Planning officers. The preliminary environmental assessment process is considered the appropriate forum to engage other authority stakeholders, including the RTA and City of Sydney.

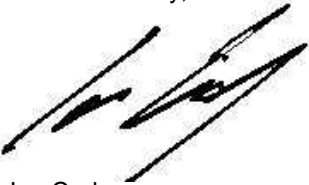
It is proposed that the Environmental Assessment process will include a process of stakeholder consultation. However, the consultation process is yet to be finalised.

7 Summary

This letter has provided an overview of the project such that DGEARs can now be prepared. We would welcome the opportunity to provide a detailed briefing to you and officers of the Department of Planning should you consider it warranted.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 8233 9970.

Yours sincerely,



Ian Cady
Associate Director