DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE

Development Assessment Systems and Approvals

SUBJECT: MODIFICATION TO THE UTS FACULTY OF SCIENCE BUILDING AT THOMAS STREET, UTS CITY CAMPUS (MP 09_0213 MOD 1)

PURPOSE

To determine a modification request (MP 09_0213 MOD 1) for the UTS Faculty of Science Building project approval, which seeks to make minor design changes to the rooftop layout, internal configurations, façade and height of the plant.

BACKGROUND

On 23 December 2009, the concept plan for the redevelopment of the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Broadway Precinct was approved. The concept plan comprises building envelopes for the new Broadway Building, Thomas Street Building and alterations to Buildings 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 10. The concept plan also included associated landscape and public domain works.

On 10 July 2012, the Director-General, as delegate of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, approved the major project for the UTS Faculty of Science Building (formerly Thomas Street Building) at Thomas Street, UTS City Campus (see **TAG B**).

The approved works comprise the construction of a six storey building including 11,295 sqm of gross floor area for education use and associated ancillary uses. The project is currently under construction.

PROPOSED MODIFICATION

The proponent is seeking to make the following minor design changes as a result of further detailed design and further details regarding the Faculty of Sciences operational requirements:

- reconfiguration of the internal floor layouts on all levels, including addition of 130 sqm of circulation and teaching space to Level 4 and reduction in floor space on Level 5 resulting in an overall decrease to the approved GFA by 38 sqm;
- addition of a new substation on Thomas Street;
- refinements to the building façades and window layouts;
- design changes to the Green Roof on Level 4 and provision of safety screening;
- reduction in height at eastern end of the building (as a result of reduction in floor space on Level 5) and adjustments to the slant of the roof resulting in a marginal height increase; and
- amendments to the location and number of flues on the roof.

MODIFICATION OF THE MINISTER'S APPROVAL

In accordance with clause 3 of Schedule 6A of the EP&A Act, section 75W of the Act as in force immediately before its repeal on 1 October 2011 and as modified by Schedule 6A, continues to apply to transitional Part 3A projects. Approved projects are transitional Part 3A projects.

Section 75W(2) of the Act provides that a proponent may request the Minister to modify the Minister's approval of a project. The Minister's approval of a modification is not required if the approval of the project as modified would be consistent with the original approval. As the proposal involves modifications to the external built form of the building and changes to the floorspace, the modification will require the Minister's approval.

CONSULTATION

In accordance with section 75X of the EP&A Act and clause 8G of the EP&A Regulation, the modification request was made available on the department's website. Due to the minor nature of the proposed modification, the modification request was not exhibited by any other means. No public submissions were received on the modification request.

The request was referred to City of Sydney Council, who is generally supportive of the modifications. Council requested that a materials and finishes board be submitted to council for approval.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The Minister has delegated his functions to determine a modification request under section 75W of the Act to the department where:

- the council has not made an objection, and
- there are less than 10 public submissions objecting to the proposal, and
- a political disclosure statement has not been made in relation to the application.

No submissions were received from the public regarding the proposed modification and council has not made an objection to the proposed modification. There has also been no political disclosure statement made for this application or for any previous related applications or by any of the persons who lodged a submission.

Accordingly, the application is able to be determined by the Director, Industry, Key Sites and Social Projects under delegation.

KEY ISSUES

The department considers the key issue related to the proposed modifications to be built form and solar access to the open space areas.

Built Form

The adjustments to the slant of the roof to accommodate lift shafts and service risers results in a marginal height increase by 0.3 metre in one section of the roof to match the maximum building height (see **Figure 1** and **2**).

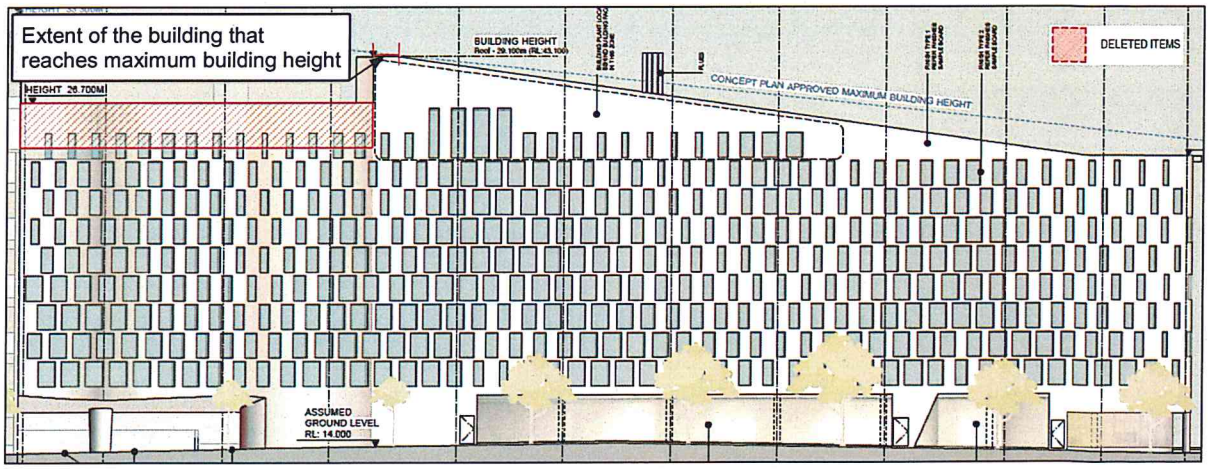

Figure 1: Approved Northern Elevation (Thomas Street)

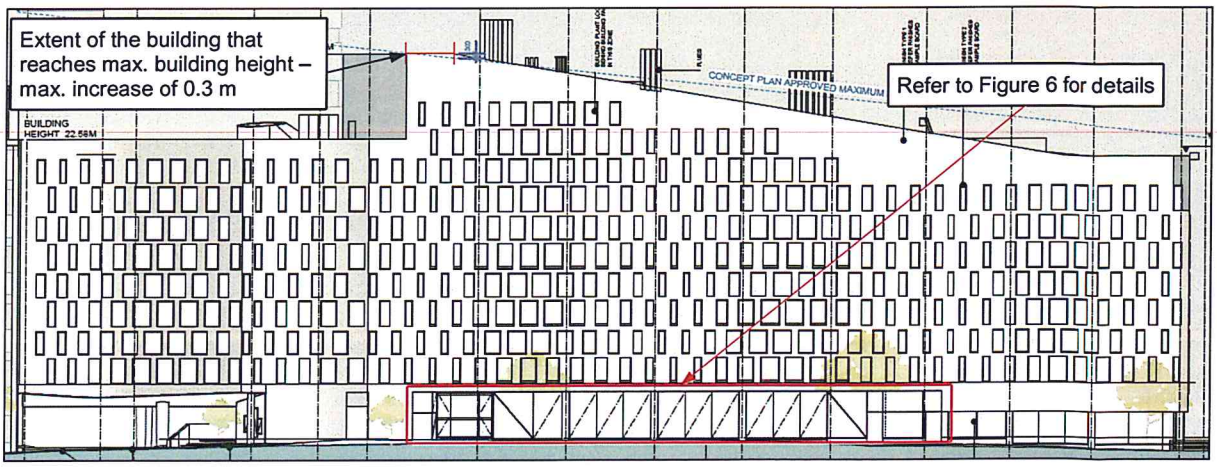

Figure 2: Proposed Northern Elevation (Thomas Street)

The department considers the height variation acceptable as:

- the height increase at its greatest is minor (0.3 metres) and only affects a relatively small portion of the building and the maximum building height remains unchanged;
- the general shape of the roof and slant is maintained, which continues to provide visual interest; and
- solar access to the internal open space area (Alumni Green) would be largely unaffected by the changes to the height and the minimal impacts would be adequately offset by the improved solar access outcomes resulting from the deletion of the eastern portion of Level 5.

The reconfiguration of the internal floor layouts, addition of 130 sqm of circulation and teaching space to Level 4 and reduction in floor space on Level 5 result in an overall decrease to the approved GFA by 38 sqm. The concept plan allowed for a total 44,650 sqm for the Broadway Building (approved under MP 09_0212 with 32,500 sqm) and the Thomas Street Building (approved with 11,295 sqm), and therefore the reduction would ensure that the proposal continues to comply with the parameters established in the concept plan approval. The department considers that the design modifications would result in a positive impact as they would reduce the overall bulk of the building when viewed from Thomas Street (see **Figure 2**).

The proposed changes to the façade, including removal of glazing elements and provision of safety screening on Level 4, would change the appearance of the building (see **Figures 3** to **5**).

Figure 3: Illustrative Perspective of the Approved Southern Elevation

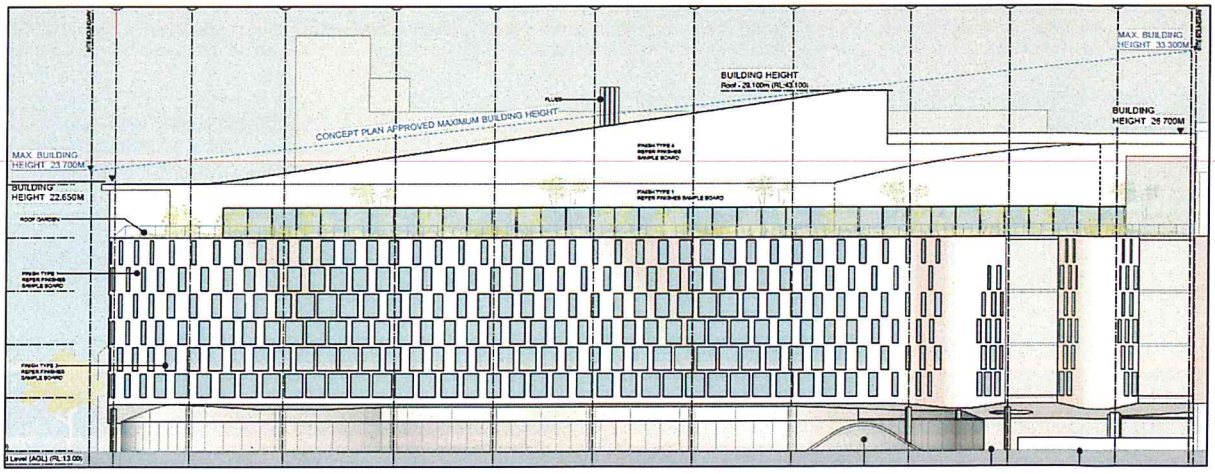

Figure 4: Approved Southern Elevation

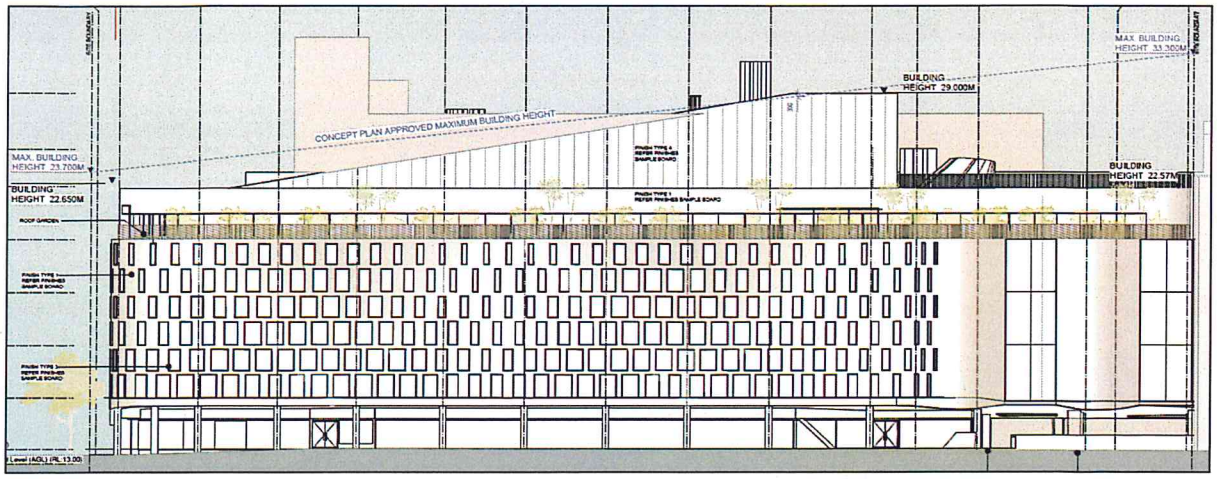

Figure 5: Proposed Southern Elevation

The deletion of the windows is confined to the eastern portion of the southern elevation where the façade is curved with two recessed columns. The department considers the changes would not have an adverse impact as the building maintains the curved form along the eastern section, which was one of the key elements of the winning scheme of the design competition for the Thomas Street Building. Whilst the windows have been deleted in this eastern portion, the windows are south-east and south-west facing and therefore would have minimal value in providing solar access to the new building given the narrowness of the recesses and the shadows cast by the building itself. Solar access would be maintained via the north facing windows to this area and the central void on the eastern edge of the building. The department considers that the provision of the safety screening on Level 4 does not adversely impact the design of the building and does not add to the bulk of the building and therefore can be supported.

Council have requested that a materials and finishes board be submitted for approval, especially given details for the treatment of the substation along Thomas Street have not been provided. The proponent has indicated that the substation portion of the façade would have a louvred façade which would be integrated into the façade design and complement the air intake louvres at the western end of the Thomas Street elevation (see ground floor detailed design in **Figure 6**). Whilst the design controls prescribed in the concept plan sought to provide further activation at ground level, the department considers the location of the substation acceptable and the design of the façade acceptable. As the remainder of the approved materials and finishes are unchanged, the department considers that it would not be necessary for further approval from council for the materials and samples board.

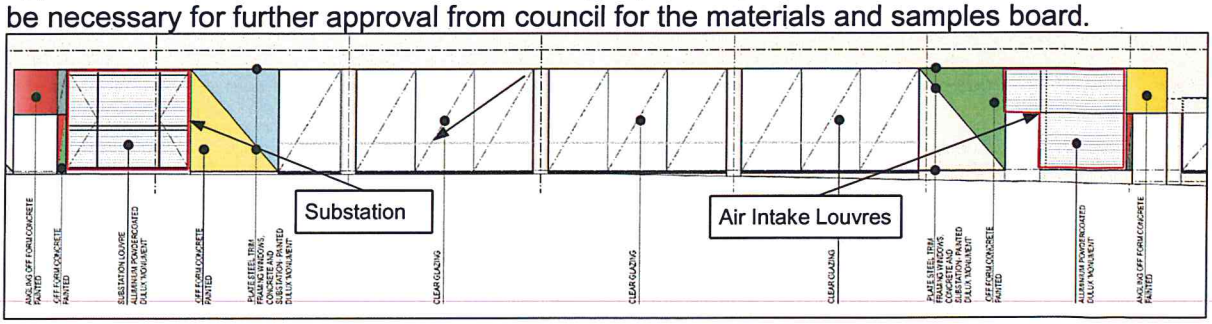

Figure 6: Part Ground Level Elevation Details (Thomas Street)

The proposed internal modifications, including reconfiguration of the floor layouts, changes to atrium spaces, and modifications to the Green Roof would have negligible impacts on the built form and environmental amenity. The amendments to the flues would also have negligible impacts.

The department considers that the proposed design modifications are minor and that the application can be supported.

Solar Access

The setback of Level 4 from the southern building edge was originally provided to increase solar access to the internal open space area. The modifications extend Level 4 to the southern boundary which would potentially reduce the solar access to the internal open space. However, the deletion of the eastern portion of Level 5 negates any potential loss of solar access and improves the level of solar access to the internal open space area. Accordingly, the department considers the modifications are acceptable as it would result in an overall improved solar access outcome for the internal open space area.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the A/Director, Industry, Key Sites and Social Projects:

- note the information provided in this briefing;
- approve the modification request, subject to amending the conditions of approval; and
- sign the attached modifying instrument (**TAG A**).

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18/12/13

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Approved by:

20/12/13

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