

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE

Development Assessment Systems and Approvals

SUBJECT: MODIFICATION TO THE WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT (MP 10_0213 MOD 2)

PURPOSE

To determine a modification request (MP 10_0213 MOD 2) for the Wollongong Hospital Redevelopment. The modifications comprise changes to the façade, clarification on the height of the approved building, reduction in the number of bicycle spaces and the addition of a roof top plant room.

BACKGROUND

On 8 June 2012, the Deputy Director-General, Development Assessment and Systems Performance, as delegate of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, approved the major project for the Wollongong Hospital Redevelopment, Crown Street, Wollongong (see **TAG B**).

The approved works comprise the:

- construction of a six storey building to accommodate the Illawarra Elective Surgical Services (IESS) and Ambulatory Care Unit (ACU), including seven new operating theatres, 66 beds, 62 new treatment bays and 20 new consultation/examination rooms;
- construction of a part two part four storey addition to Block A to accommodate an expansion of the emergency unit and provision of an additional 10 treatment bays;
- demolition, including the removal of the 1941 western portion of Elouera House and modifications to ameliorate those demolition works;
- refurbishment works to the existing Block A clinical building, including provision of a new combined main entry;
- additions to the loading dock zone;
- provision of a new vehicle drop off zone on New Dapto Road;
- landscape and public domain works;
- part pedestrianisation of the existing internal Hospital Road;
- excavation works for basement;
- utility works including new water main connections, relocation of gas meter and new substations;
- removal of 21 trees; and
- sustainable transport, operational and waste procedures.

The project is currently under construction.

On 26 November 2013, the A/Director, Industry, Key Sites and Social Projects, under delegation from the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, approved MP 10_0213 MOD 1 to modify the development to include demolition works, removal of at-grade car parking; tree removal, bulk excavation, construction of a six level car park with 754 car spaces, connections to the existing hospital car park, alterations to the façade of the existing car park, landscaping works and associated signage.

PROPOSED MODIFICATION

The proponent is seeking:

- to modify the design of the façade of the IESS/ACU building;
- to clarify the height of the IESS/ACU building;
- a reduction in the number of bicycle spaces from 100 to 30;
- to vary the condition regarding the type of bicycle storage space required;
- the addition of a roof top plant room; and
- changes to internal campus street lighting.

The proponent is seeking changes due to design development and the need to rationalise construction costs and works. The modifications also seek to reduce ongoing maintenance issues and associated costs.

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 proposed modification seeks to modify the external built form and amend the conditions of the approval, 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 Wollongong Council. Council has not provided a submission.

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 issues for the modification to be the visual impacts of the changes to the built form and the availability of bicycle storage within the campus.

Built Form Visual Impact

The visual impact of the revised built form of the IESS/ACU building is a relevant consideration given the scale of the building and its elevated location within the context of the locality and the site. The design of the façade is also visually sensitive given the minimal set back to the Loftus Street boundary and the proximity to the adjacent locally listed heritage item, Elouera House.

The proposed façade changes have the potential to result in a more visually intrusive built form by accentuating the visual mass of the building given the more minimalistic approach to the modulation and articulation of the façade (see **Figures 1 and 2**). The revised design removes vertical elements, including a reduction in the openings, blade walls, material changes, such as glazing and louvres, which provided visual interest along the lengthy Loftus Street facade. The proponent has simplified the design to reduce ongoing maintenance costs associated with cleaning of the facades and to reduce construction costs.



Figure 1: Photomontage perspective of the approved Loftus Street façade



Figure 2: Photomontage perspective of the proposed Loftus Street façade

The department considers the revised design of the lower levels of the building, with an increase in the use of brick, provides a more sympathetic response to the adjacent heritage item and therefore can be supported. The revised design of the Loftus Street elevation maintains a visual separation between the podium and upper levels by setting back the upper levels and providing distinctive colour palettes for the two modulated elements (see **Figure 2**). A further setback of the plant level is also provided to minimise the bulk along the Loftus Street elevation. The department considers the revised design acceptable as the visual separation and projecting corrugated metal façade with orange fibre cement panels and projecting awnings provide visual interest along the extensive façade. The additional setback of the plant level also reduces the massing of the building.

The eastern elevation of the building has also been simplified by removing the glazing and vertical articulation, resulting in a solid form (see **Figure 2**). The department accepts that due to the functions located behind this elevation (predominantly fire stairs and plant) it would be unreasonable to require costly glazing treatments and the like to be provided. The department considers the projecting panels that have been incorporated in the design

of the eastern elevation provide visual interest which reduces the visual intrusiveness of the eastern facade.

The remaining visible elevations to the west and south are modulated through the smaller form of the two wings and provide adequate articulation through the use of vertical and horizontal glazing elements (see **Figure 3**).



Figure 3: Photomontage perspective of the proposed facades from the south-west

The department considers the proposal for an additional plant room to the southern wing to offset the reduced size of the plant room of the northern wing (see **Figures 4 and 5**) acceptable given it is located internally and is not visible from the public domain. The proposed changes would not have any view impacts and the height would be the same as the height of the plant room of the northern wing.

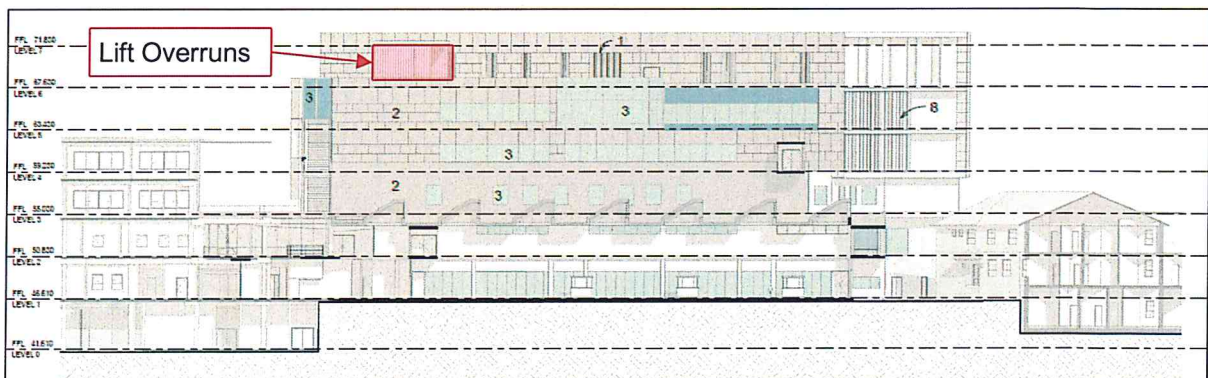


Figure 4: Approved southern elevation

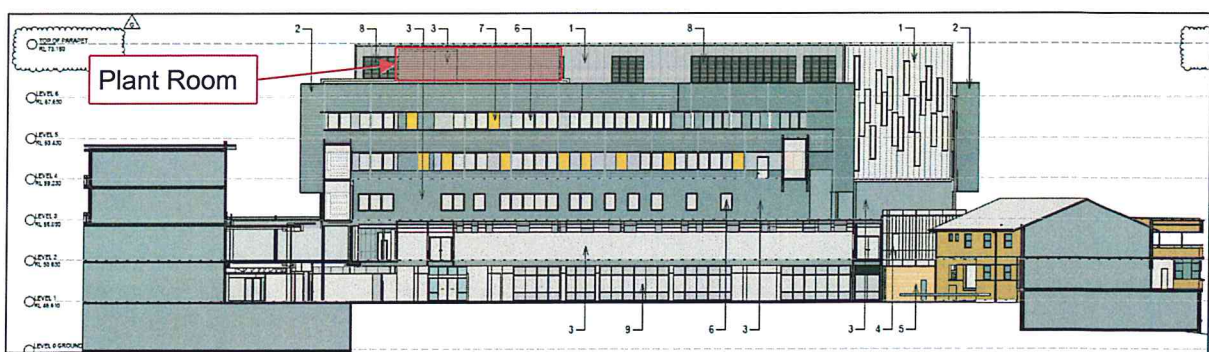


Figure 5: Proposed southern elevation

The proponent has also sought to clarify the approved height of the IESS/ACU building which was measured from the plans by the department at 26.525 metres in the original application. The proponent has identified that the actual height of the building will be 26.54 metres and a maximum RL 73.150 has been included in the revised plans. The proposed building continues to comply with the 60 metre height limit prescribed in the Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009 and would have no additional environmental impacts given the marginal height difference. The department recommends that the revised plans which stipulate this height be approved.

Bicycle Storage

The proponent originally sought to provide 100 bicycle spaces to support active transport use and to offset a lack of car parking in the original approval. The applicant seeks to reduce the available bicycle spaces to 30 as it is expected that staff, patients and visitors are unlikely to use bicycles as a main mode of transport given the hospital's elevated position, the small mode share of bicycles (less than one per cent) for journeys to work in the Wollongong area and the public and private transport options. The department notes that the hospital redevelopment has been modified to include a car park with 754 car spaces. The Planning guidelines for walking and cycling requires a minimum of 30 bicycle spaces based on 66 new hospital beds and 444 staff. Therefore, the modified number of bicycle spaces meets these guidelines. The department considers that the condition requiring a minimum of 100 bicycle spaces can be modified to require a minimum of 30 bicycle spaces.


The proponent is also seeking to modify condition B9 which requires that Class 2 bicycle facilities be provided for staff - i.e. a lockable compound for the bicycle storage spaces. Class 3 bicycle facilities are now proposed - i.e. bicycle rails. The department notes that seven spaces are required for staff under the guidelines, and therefore given the small number of spaces and the low percentage of staff expected to use this mode share, the Class 3 facilities are acceptable in this instance. The department recommends that the condition be modified accordingly.

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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