

GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT NEW SOUTH WALES

12 May 2026

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PROJECT: 70-78 & 82-86 Menangle Rd, Camden

RE: State Design Review Panel – 1 May 2026 – Review 2

Dear Brooke,

Thank you for committing to the ongoing review of the above project through the SDRP. Please find below a summary of advice and recommendations arising from the design review session held on 1 May 2026.

The project team is commended for the significant progress made since the first SDRP session. The articulation of the design principles and contributions from the Connecting with Country process and landscape architect have enriched the project. The proposal responded positively to the advice provided in the first letter and the proposal has evolved into a more resolved and coherent scheme, demonstrating an improved relationship between built form, landscape, and communal open space, with more thoughtfully considered spaces and refined building articulation. The overall quality and clarity of the design package are also acknowledged.

To assist the next stage of design development, this letter focuses on refinement of access, address and secure lines, the design of communal open spaces, ground-level interfaces, architectural expression and materiality, and ensuring the proposal continues to provide high levels of amenity for future residents.

The following elements of the proposal are supported:

- The themes derived from the principles of Country, subject to the advice below.
- The general massing and site strategy, including upper-level setbacks to assist in breaking down the perceived building scale, subject to the advice below.
- The location of building entries adjacent to established trees.

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- The landscape approach, including the retention of existing trees, the integration of WSUD, the garden character and communal open space strategy, subject to the advice below.
- Site planning that creates opportunities for residents to move across and around the site, subject to the advice below.
- The strong relationship between communal open spaces, common circulation and internal communal rooms, including the framing of views.
- The consolidation of the basement generally beneath the building footprints.
- The referencing of the local vernacular, including the adjoining hospital and nurses' quarters, in the development of the materiality and character of the architecture.

In addition to the advice provided in the previous letter, the following commentary provides further advice and recommendations for the project:

Connecting with Country and cultural heritage

Elements of the Country process have positively informed the development of the scheme. The themes and principles are becoming clearer, with an opportunity to further consolidate them so they continue to guide the proposal.

1. Strengthen and consolidate the Country themes and design principles to provide a clear design framework for the proposal, clearly informing the site strategy, landscape structure, communal spaces, built form, and material expression.
2. Continue to ensure ICIP protocols are in place throughout all phases of the project to protect cultural knowledge and ensure appropriate attribution.
3. Continue to refer to the [Connecting with Country Framework](#), [Frequently Asked Questions and case studies](#) on the GANSW website for more information and guidance.
4. Explore opportunities to commemorate the public use of the site as a nurses' accommodation that served a broader public purpose.

Site strategy and landscape

The landscape approach, communal open spaces and a walking loop, provides a clear framework for organising the site and supporting resident amenity. Further refinement is required to ensure entries, movement paths, communal spaces and boundary conditions are legible, accessible and carefully resolved, with particular attention to privacy, surveillance and enclosure.

5. Refine the arrival and address strategy across the site to ensure entries are legible, safe, and clearly understood from the public domain.
 - a. Clarify the primary address for each building, ensuring entries remain legible from the street, particularly where they are recessed or set back. Balance clear primary entries with the benefits of providing residents with choice in how they arrive and leave the buildings.
 - b. Confirm the role and necessity of secondary entries to Buildings A2 and B. Where retained, ensure they are safe, accessible, legible and do not dilute the clarity of the primary entry sequence.
 - c. Refine the ground-level entry sequence to each building, clearly resolving secure lines, lobby arrangements, and the relationship between entries, apartments, and circulation spaces.
 - d. Confirm the location of intercoms, letter boxes, waiting areas, weather protection.
6. Review the access management strategy, including fencing, gates and boundary treatments to improve perceptions of safety and support a clear and welcoming public-private interface.
 - a. Undertake a CPTED review of the proposal to clarify the hierarchy of access and control points, maximise passive surveillance, retain appropriate choice in how residents access the site, and avoid spaces that could create entrapment or safety concerns.
 - b. Minimise unnecessary gates and fencelines and avoid a fragmented arrival sequence.
 - c. Provide further detail on fence height, materiality, transparency, and the relationship to planting, particularly on the southern end of Site A adjacent to the car park.

7. Ensure greater levels of equity across the sites, ensuring accessibility to and through all communal areas and a high degree of comfort for future residents.
 - a. Accessible routes should be clear and not overly circuitous, while still allowing choice in movement.
 - b. Avoid reliance on basement routes, and minimise or eliminate stairs in favour of ramps where feasible.
 - c. Review connections between Site A's upper central communal open space and the lower-level eastern communal open space.
 - d. Revisit the connection between the Building A2 lobby, basement car park and the communal open space to support improved accessibility.
8. Carefully resolve the ground-level interfaces, particularly at Site B, to improve activation, safety and amenity.
 - a. Review the layout and interrelationship between the recreation room, foyer and communal open space. Consider whether a terrace or deck could better connect the recreation room with the communal open space.
 - b. Avoid access arrangements that require residents to move through or alongside the car park.
 - c. Demonstrate how car park screening, natural ventilation and façade treatment are integrated to avoid blank or inactive edges to the eastern frontage.
9. Refine the communal open space configuration to ensure spaces are comfortable, usable and do not compromise the privacy or amenity of adjoining apartments.
 - a. Carefully program the upper-level courtyard of Site A, taking into consideration potential impacts on ground floor apartments.
 - b. Review the lower-level communal open spaces between and beside buildings to ensure they are not residual, poorly surveilled or uncomfortable to occupy.
 - c. Carefully locate and orient seating, BBQ areas, gathering spaces and projecting balconies to capture outlook and sun while avoiding direct views into adjoining apartments.

10. Consider the operational needs of social and affordable housing residents, including how communal rooms, parking, loading areas and entries may support visiting health, community and support services.
11. Enhance the Menangle Road landscape interface for the northern communal open space, including providing additional shade tree planting to improve summer comfort and mitigate western sun exposure.
12. Continue to develop the sustainable drainage and green infrastructure strategy so swales, OSD and water management elements are integrated with the landscape and contribute positively to the character and experience of the site.
13. Review the deep soil calculations to ensure they accurately identify areas that meet deep soil criteria, particularly where areas are located adjacent to driveways or constrained by basement, retaining structures or services.
14. Test the relationship between Building B and 88 Menangle Road, including privacy, outlook, built form transition and landscape interface.

Architecture

Further refinement is required to simplify the façade composition, clarify the hierarchy of materials and ensure architectural elements are robust, buildable and enduring.

15. Refine the architectural expression and material palette to achieve a simpler and more cohesive outcome.
 - a. Continue to draw on the character of the former nurses' quarters and other local vernacular elements, including the use of setback, balcony and façade depth and materiality to refine the architectural expression. Explore opportunities to reuse existing materials from site and reinforce the use of brick as the primary material reference.
 - b. Reduce the number of competing façade elements and reconsider the use of weatherboard and timber elements, noting their limited relationship to buildings of this scale.
 - c. Review the extent and expression of concrete, with consideration of embodied carbon and the need to minimise concrete where possible.

- d. Refine the balcony, column and façade framing strategy to ensure these elements are elegant, well-proportioned and easy to build.
 - e. Introduce subtle variation between the buildings on Sites A and B to provide differentiation while maintaining a cohesive overall character.
- 16. Review the layout of the lift lobbies, breezeways and open corridor, particularly at ground level of Building B, having regard to security, weather protection and wind conditions. Consider whether ground-level lift and corridor areas should be enclosed while maintaining the benefits of open-air corridors at upper levels where appropriate.
 - 17. Refine apartment planning to maximise opportunities for cross-ventilation, privacy, acoustic separation and lower-level amenity. Where ventilation relies on gaps or openings between apartments, ensure the extent of operable area and privacy impacts are carefully tested.
 - 18. Review the upper-level setbacks and how the area between the enclosed balconies and building edge will be handled.
 - 19. Review the roof profile, soffit and edge condition considering safety-in-design, buildability and coordination of services. Roof plant, PV panels, access requirements, safety balustrades and maintenance zones should be resolved early so they do not compromise the intended architectural silhouette.

Sustainability and climate change

The project has begun to integrate sustainability, landscape and water management strategies. These should be further developed so they are clearly embedded in the architecture, landscape and technical resolution of the scheme.

- 20. Provide a more detailed sustainability strategy that demonstrates how passive design, natural ventilation, façade performance, renewable energy, water management, material selection and embodied carbon are informing the design.
- 21. Demonstrate how the proposal responds to the site's microclimate, including western sun, summer heat and wind exposure associated with the ridgeline location.

The advice provided is to be addressed through further design development and as part of the EIS submission.

The following information should be provided to assist in the assessment of the proposal:

22. Overshadowing and solar access modelling of impacts of Building B on the adjoining property to the south at 88 Menangle Road.

Please contact GANSW Design Advisor, Wendy Lam
(wendy.lam@dpie.nsw.gov.au), if you have any queries regarding this advice.

Sincerely,



Marco Geretto
Principal Design Advisor
Chair, SDRP

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