

# GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT NEW SOUTH WALES

12<sup>th</sup> August 2021

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PROJECT: Wilkinson House SCEGGS  
RE: SDRP SESSION 82 – 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021 (1<sup>st</sup> SDRP)

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above project at an early stage. Please find a summary of advice and recommendations arising from the design review session held on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

The project team's thorough presentation and level of detail shown is commended, and the proposal exhibited strong potential to achieve good design outcomes. The project has several layers of heritage significance, and GANSW acknowledges the Conservation Management Plan is still under peer review and is yet to be endorsed. In the absence of an endorsed CMP, informed commentary on the heritage aspects, which are critical to the project, has not been able to be provided. Once the CMP is endorsed, some of the advice below may need to be revisited to align with the CMP.

The following elements of the design strategy are supported:

- The vigorous design process run by SCEGGS, including the voluntary design excellence competition and efforts to engage a suitable design team.
- The adaptive re-use of Wilkinson House for learning spaces and sports facilities to support the senior school as presented.
- Sensitivity of the design proposition and heritage interpretation strategy of remembering and referencing the original planning of the building.
- The retention of the building's original skin and reuse of existing materials.
- Reinstatement of the original floor levels enabling the windows to retain their original relationship to the internal spaces.

The following commentary provides advice and recommendations for the project:

## **Connecting with Country and Landscape**

1. A deeper understanding of Country can inform richer and more responsive design solutions. The project has opportunities to respond to the [Draft GANSW Connecting with Country Framework](#). The following recommendations apply:

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- a. Continue engagement with cultural groups and explore the school's relationship with Indigenous culture to inform a meaningful approach to Country and seek ways to strengthen these connections.
  - b. Formulate strategies to embed Country led thinking into the pedagogy of the school as part of this project.
  - c. Consider a variety of methods to reinterpret pre-European heritage that are relevant to the school and its relationship with Indigenous culture including artwork, landscape and materials.
  - d. Seek opportunities to incorporate Indigenous stories and approaches to learning as a living culture into the school.
2. The oculus in the roof, rooftop tree and terrace are supported however the proportion, scale and species of tree will influence the success of the space.
- a. Provide spatial studies to illustrate the space is of appropriate scale and design for the intended use.
  - b. Investigate appropriate tree species that will be able to thrive in the rooftop location and grow to a suitable scale for the space. Consider opportunities to reference the pre-colonial landscape of the site.

### **Heritage and Architecture**

The scope of work proposed is initially supported, pending endorsement of the CMP. The architecture will need to be carefully considered and delicately detailed to transform this project into a successful heritage adaptive re-use building. The following recommendations apply:

- 3. The proposed height increase, changes to the roof profile and new lift extension is initially supported subject to further design development.
  - a. Provide further detailed street studies illustrating how the modifications and additions to the building sit within the heritage streetscape.
  - b. Demonstrate further design development and detailing of the connections between the new lift extension and the adjacent building fabric, particularly at the roof line.
- 4. There is a clear language and rhythm across the facades of solid, voids, shadow and depth which contribute to the heritage character along the streetscape, of which the balconies play a key role. The balcony infill proposed results in the sense of the balconies along the street being lost:
  - a. Increase the recess depth of the balcony infill glazing line to a depth that maintains a strong sense of the balconies, including the void and shadow qualities of those spaces.
  - b. Provide adequate depth to enable sufficient solar protection to the internal spaces and avoid the introduction of other shading elements.
  - c. Consider full height sliding doors to the balcony glazing to maximise the façade openings, allowing the balconies to be in keeping with their original purpose and provide natural ventilation to the learning spaces.
  - d. The glazing design is at early stages and needs further development. Provide detail studies demonstrating the development and refinement of the glazing design and quality of the detailing around the balcony openings.
- 5. The materials proposed are generally supported with the following recommendations:

- a. While a terracotta tile roof would be more typical of the period in which Wilkinson House was constructed, a copper roof, elegantly and carefully detailed, can be supported if this does not contradict the guidance of the CMP.
- b. Explore using the same materials of the Wilkinson building roof (whether they be copper or terracotta tile) on the new lift extension to be in keeping with the building fabric.
- c. Consider substituting bagged brick with different materials as this is not in keeping with the heritage fabric of the building.
- d. The use of terrazzo is supported.

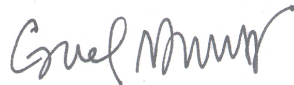
#### **Sustainability and Climate Change**

6. The proposed reuse of building materials is commended. Investigate additional methods of recycling materials including the subfloor and structure, either in this or future SCEGGS projects. Zero waste of the site is encouraged.
7. Provide further information on the sustainability metrics including Green star targets and percentage of the energy needs of the school being met by on-site generation.
8. Aiming for a net-zero building is highly encouraged in line with NSW's Net Zero emissions goal by 2050. Refer to ['NSW, DPIE, Net Zero Plan, Stage 1: 2020-2030'](#) for further information.

In summary, the design strategy of the project is commended, however several advice items may require revision once the CMP is endorsed, at which time GANSW will determine whether another SDRP session is required. A further SDRP session may be held once the project EIS has been lodged if the timing is appropriate.

Please contact GANSW Design Advisor, [Melissa Riley [Melissa.riley@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Melissa.riley@dpie.nsw.gov.au)], if you have any queries regarding this advice.

Sincerely,



Carol Marra  
Principal Design Advisor  
Chair, SDRP

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