

Director General
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
23-33 Bridge Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Attn: Megan Fu

11 March 2013

Dear Madam,

**RE: STATE SIGNIFICANCE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION
UNSW MATERIAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
NEW BUILDING REF: SSD5373**

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the UNSW Campus Design Advisory Panel (CDAP), which reviews master planning and design proposals for the Kensington campus and provides advice to the Vice Chancellor and the Facilities Management team, and whose members include Professor Alec Tzannes, Professor James Weirick, Emeritus Professor John Niland, Ms Helen Lochhead, Ms Abby Galvin, and Mr Peter Root.

The Material Science and Engineering Project was the subject of an Invited Design Competition, and members of the CDAP Panel participated as jurors. Subsequently the winning design by Grimshaw Architects has been presented on two occasions and refinements have been made to the design as a result of these reviews. In addition I have reviewed (on behalf of the CDAP) the most recent refinements to the design, as now submitted for development approval.

The CDAP consider the proposal to be well resolved and believes that it will make a positive contribution to the campus and surrounding streetscape. We are satisfied with the architects response to matters raised by the panel and have provided our endorsement of the design proposal.

Building height

While the building height exceeds the DCP maximum, recent work by Urbis on an Urban Design framework for the lower and western campus has explored the principle of increasing heights within the central zones of the campus consistent with existing buildings, and this proposal in principal has not been opposed when discussed with representatives of Randwick City Council.

As viewed from High Street, the building forms a back drop to the residential colleges, and as a result of the length of the floor plate, has a horizontal proportion appropriate to this setting.

This proposal provides for a distinctive and elegant architectural expression to the upper facades which relates well to the essential and modernist character of the new generation of buildings within the campus.

The new building is adjacent to a proposed new park of substantial scale, and its height is appropriate given the dimensions of the park. The design of this park is currently the subject of an invited competition.

The form of the building is defined within a strong geometric discipline, with roof top services carefully contained. The scale of the building is enhanced by the subtle variation in the pattern of the external louvers – a simple yet effective device. This results in reducing the dominance of the new building in the context of its immediate neighbours.

Common facilities are located at the lower levels, allowing greater engagement at the pedestrian dominated ground plane. This will be further enhanced and integrated through the design of the new park.

The CDAP is of the view that a rigorous design excellence process has been undertaken, and the form, expression and materiality of the architecture is appropriate to the setting and function of the building, and is of high architectural quality.

This project will make a significant contribution to the quality of the Kensington campus as it continues to undergo a major transformation to provide amenity to the students and increased quality to the character of the campus and wider neighbourhood.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ken Maher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Ken Maher LFRAIA, FAIA
Professor, Faculty of Built Environment, UNSW
Chair, Campus Design Advisory Panel, UNSW