

3.1 Materiality and Expression

The University of Sydney is Australia's oldest tertiary education institution and is commonly referred to as the "Sandstone University." Many of the University's dominant sandstone buildings are located on Eastern Avenue. The proposed Administration Building should acknowledge the significance of its context and reflect this within its architecture.

The building needs to be an inspiring, transparent, visible and elegant piece of architecture promoting and embodying the leadership of the University. It must reflect the heritage, elegance and craftsmanship expected for a University building of its kind.

The building expression will reflect the typology of the historic Madsen, Stuart Anderson and Quadrangle Buildings that will portray a gravitas and permanence. Whilst history and tradition are of great significance, it is an ambition of the University to also be forward thinking and evolutionary in the selection of a material palette for the building. Therefore the proposals are considering how best to reconcile the desire to recognise the University's strong heritage and its future ambitions as a modern institution.

Ultimately the building needs to be beautiful, both in its conceptual narrative and as a higher considered and detailed building - reflecting the language and character of the University. The key ambition is to use a material that creates a dialogue with other buildings along Eastern Avenue. Multiple layered glazing also provides a depth to the facade whilst forming a contemporary and timeless facade.

The roof creates a powerful statement that not only encompasses the building but reaches out to engage with the public via the colonnade on Eastern Avenue and City Road. This civic gesture welcomes people not only to the building but also importantly to the campus.

The material palette for the solid rain screen elements is proposed to utilise GRC. The material offers a high quality finish, depth and variation that would be suitable for the building and would offer the modern / contemporary feel the University is seeking.



Workshop feedback from the University has focused on the materiality of the building both in appearance and quality. The University has also identified the City Road Gateway Buildings as being the transition between the “Old” and “New”. The palette of material chosen for F23 reads as contemporary and “light” whilst using the materials that acknowledge its context.

The materials on the previous page explore the variation in materiality between the two prominent cladding materials - the solid rain screen cladding system and the metallic finishes of the roof, columns and louvres.

Having reviewed the matrix of possibilities, Grimshaw believe the best outcomes are provided by the light or cream coloured rain screen cladding in combination with the darker metallic elements of the building composition. The lighter ranges of the solid cladding offer a more modern and contemporary presence to the building which is accented and complimented by the contrasting darkening tones of the metallic finishes.

