

Weir Phillips Heritage

20 September, 2017

The Director
Social Infrastructure Assessments
Department of Planning and Environment, Planning Services
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

**Re: State Significant Development Application for the Redevelopment of UNSW
Cliffbrook Campus (SSF 8126)**

Dear Sir/Madam

I have been asked by the University of New South Wales (UNSW) to address a number of heritage issues raised in a letter from the City of Randwick Council, prepared in response to the proposed redevelopment of UNSW Cliffbrook Campus (SF8126), and dated 12 August, 2017 (Section A). Minor amendments to the proposed works to *Cliffbrook* and the Garage have also been made, the impacts of which are addressed below (Section B). The recommendations made by the NSW Heritage Council are also reviewed (Section C).

Weir Phillips Heritage prepared a Conservation Management Plan for the site (hereafter referred to as the *CMP 2017*) and a Heritage Impact Statement (hereafter referred as the *HIS 2017*) to accompany the SSD submission.

A. Response to Submission from the City of Randwick Council

Weir Phillips Heritage have been asked to address the following issues, summarised from those raised in Council's letter with regard to heritage:

Issue 1: Visual Impacts

The new building will form a different backdrop to *Cliffbrook*- 'the monolithic nature of its curved glazed wall detracts from the setting of *Cliffbrook* and significantly erodes its curtilage.'

Issue 2: Setback

The setback between *Cliffbrook* and proposed building has decreased compared to previous.

Issue 3: Landscape

The removal of vegetation impacts the setting of *Cliffbrook* and will 'diminish its heritage significance.'

Issue 4: Heritage

- (a) Structural Damage** - Concerns that the proximity of the new buildings could impact on the structural stability of the heritage buildings. Strict consent conditions should be included to protect and monitor existing structures.

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- (b) Landscaping – The proposal will impact on the setting of *Cliffbrook* through the removal of vegetation, with the new building forming the backdrop to the heritage item instead of vegetation.
- (c) Setting and Curtilage – The footprint of the new building will impact on the curtilage and setting of the main eastern façade of the heritage item.
- (d) Building Envelope – The height compared to heritage item. Extensive glazing with projecting spandrels incorporating planter boxes forms the new backdrop to *Cliffbrook* – ‘The detailed design should ensure that the new building forms a neutral and recessive backdrop to the heritage item.’
- (e) Views – ‘whilst the proposed development has an extensive footprint at ground floor level, the footprint at first, second and third floor levels is reduced, potentially opening up available views from *Cliffbrook* to the east.’

Each of these issues is addressed separately below.

Issue 1: Visual Impacts

The new building form will provide a vastly improved backdrop to *Cliffbrook* when compared with the indifferent architecture that currently surrounds it to the north and east.

Cliffbrook is currently surrounded on two sides by large buildings that were built in stages by several different architects. As assessed in the *CMP 2017*, these buildings do not exhibit architectural merit. The proposal has been carefully designed to provide a simple backdrop to *Cliffbrook*. It does not have a ‘monolithic nature’; rather, it demonstrates design excellence and will form a handsome compliment to *Cliffbrook*. The elevations addressing *Cliffbrook* have a lightweight appearance created through the use of semi-transparent walkways and stairs. The proposal places its highest point furthest from the *Cliffbrook* and tapers down to the south to maintain, and even widen, the view corridor to the sea at first floor level.

The curved glazed wall and simple building form provide a clear backdrop to *Cliffbrook* that allows the house to stand alone and to be understood ‘in-the-round’ within its curtilage. It is further noted, with regard to impacts on curtilage, that the curved form of the new building responds to the curved driveway on the eastern side of *Cliffbrook* in a way that the existing buildings in this location do not. This driveway line is significant and is the most dominant landscape element on this side of *Cliffbrook*. The curving form increases setback, softens the perception of massing and scale and creates a building form that ‘embraces’ *Cliffbrook*.

The principal view corridors towards *Cliffbrook* are from the south and southeast towards the front elevation. In these views, the new building is set to the side of the front elevation allowing this elevation to remain the focal point within this view corridor. There will also be excellent, unhindered, views from the new building to *Cliffbrook* allowing ready appreciation of the building by users of the new facility.

Issue 2: Setback

The 4-5m minimum setback from *Cliffbrook* established by the *CMP 2017* is observed on the northern side and substantially exceeded on the other sides of the building. There remains clearance between the buildings to provide landscaping; the clear separation means that *Cliffbrook* can be read ‘in the round.’

Issue 3: Landscape

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The proposal seeks to remove as little vegetation as is possible and avoids the removal of historically significant trees.

There is also a comprehensive and sympathetic landscape plan accompanying the proposal. This landscape plan will enhance the setting of *Cliffbrook* through the use of formal landscaping around it, reflecting the formal plan of the house.

There is provision for considerable new and appropriate planting on the site. It is noted that the scheme includes the conservation of the extensive bushland leading down to Gordons Bay.

This issue is further considered below under Issue 4 below.

Issue 4: Heritage

Structural Damage

Buildings such as those proposed are regularly built in relatively close proximity to heritage items. Council can condition a dilapidation report and a construction methodology statement. As the University wishes to use this building as the core of the facility, it has every reason to protect it during the construction phase.

Landscaping

There is little significant vegetation between *Cliffbrook* and the existing buildings. As set out in the *CMP 2017*, most of the pathways and planting on the site dates from after 1943. *Cliffbrook* does not appear to have had a formal or extensive garden layout during its period of private occupation. Some of the existing planting on the site is reasonably mature and dates from the time of the AAEC's tenure. The UNSW have since added considerably to the vegetation on the site. The individual trees/shrubs/paths etc. within the post 1943 landscaping do not have heritage significance. Rather, it is the visual contribution that a landscaped setting as a whole makes to *Cliffbrook* that is of significance. The proposal provides for a new landscape scheme that will compliment *Cliffbrook* as it matures. It is designed to ensure that, while the new building will be visible in views towards the front elevation of *Cliffbrook* from the east, *Cliffbrook* will remain the focal point.

Setting and Curtilage

The proposed footprint follows the footprint of the existing buildings. The curved part of the building in the elbow between the Battery Street wing and the north/south wing is the only area of encroachment. The curve is used to create a formal setting for *Cliffbrook*. See remarks under Issues 1 and 2 above.

Building Envelope

The section of the building along Battery Street lies below the ridge height of *Cliffbrook*. The detailed design is being developed to reinforce the new building as a neutral and recessive backdrop to *Cliffbrook*.

Views

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The proposal is carefully sited to preserve views. Views to the east are improved at first floor level.

B. Amended Plans for Works to *Cliffbrook* and the Garage

The submitted plans for works to *Cliffbrook* and the Garage have been amended as follows:

Cliffbrook

Change	Impact
Raise floor in area where floor lower to make access to the toilet (ground floor)	This work is required to make the space accessible. The floor currently steps down from the adjoining room. The impact is acceptable. This area has been altered by past works and is a secondary, utility, space. Raising the floor will not result in the loss of a significant floor surface. The threshold into the adjoining room should be salvaged.
Raise door and add external step outside to align with new floor levels (ground floor)	The impact is minimal and acceptable. This space was originally an open porch; the door is not original or significant fabric. This is a secondary elevation; the addition of an exterior step will have a minimal impact. The terrazzo door threshold can be re-used.
Remove cupboards and add a laundry to the Manager's apartment (first floor)	This work will have no impact. This cupboard is not original or significant fabric and does not provide information about past use not available in other records.
Remove the surviving original fixtures and fittings in the Level 1 bathroom	While remodelling was shown in the original application, it was not clear if the surviving terrazzo floor and wall tiles would be retained. It is now proposed to remove these finishes. The impact is acceptable because the finishes are in poor condition and because not enough of the original fabric/fittings survive to truly appreciate the character of the original space.

Garage

Change	Impact
Remove highlight windows above the entry doors and extend height of new doors	This work will have no impact. These doors are not original or significant fabric, but were installed in 1993. No changes will be made to the openings. The glazing pattern does not follow a known earlier pattern.

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Change	Impact
Replace 2 x side doors north and south with new doors and reverse swing.	This work will have a minimal impact. The doors are not original or significant fabric. Their replacement will have a minimal impact. The openings will not be modified.
Replace south side louvre window with new window.	This work will have a minimal impact. This window has been previously modified. The opening will not be altered.

C. NSW Heritage Council

It is noted that, in a letter dated 9 August, 2017, the Heritage Council of NSW expressed support for the proposed design, raising no issues with regard to setback, massing and scale and the style of the new building. The Heritage Council recommend the following conditions of consent:

- An archival photographic recording of buildings to be demolished (CC2 + CC4), *Cliffbrook* (CC1) and the garage (CC3) and the perimeter stone wall, is to be undertaken prior to the commencement of works, and all changes to the house, garage and stone wall should be carefully recorded in accordance with the Heritage Council document, Photographic Recording of Heritage Items using Film or Digital Capture. The original copy of the archival record shall be deposited with the Heritage Branch, an additional copy shall be provided to the City of Randwick.
- A Heritage Interpretation Plan for the whole of the *Cliffbrook* site, inclusive of all periods of the site's history, must be prepared and implemented prior to the issue of an Occupation Certificate.
- All heritage work to be supervised by a qualified heritage consultant to ensure that the impact of the works on the heritage significance of the building is minimised and all work has been carried out in accordance with the approved documentation and the conditions of this consent.
- All work to be carried out by suitably qualified tradesmen with practical experience in conservation and restoration of similar heritage items. The nominated heritage consultant shall be consulted prior to the selection of appropriate tradesmen.
- Further development and resolution of the design details should occur in consultation with the Nominated Heritage Consultant
- All significant fabric removed is to be labelled and securely stored on site for possible reinstatement at a later date and / or used for interpretation.
- Historical Archaeology is to be managed in accordance with the Archaeological Assessment, prepared by MDCA, dated 3 March 2017, which recommends targeted historical archaeological testing in accordance with the research design and excavation methodology outlined in their report.
- On completion of the testing the results should be documented in a report supplied to the Secretary of DPE and the Heritage Council of NSW. The results should be used to inform detailed project design and the future management of any identified archaeological resource.

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These conditions of consent are considered appropriate to the site.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 8076 5317 if you have any questions,

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Phillips', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Phillips (Director)