

## A103 Memorandum

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Project Name: Newcastle Courthouse Redevelopment | Nihon University

Project No: auncl-17-0347

Reference: 17-0347 memo 26 – 11.07.2019

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### 26 SSD-9787 Nihon University Newcastle Campus – Urban Design Response

We refer to City of Newcastle's (CoN) letter of response to the proposed Nihon University Newcastle Campus and provide the following comments in reply to the items raised in their correspondence.

#### i. Item 1 Urban Design

Following the presentation of the proposal for the Nihon University Newcastle Campus to CoN's Urban Design Consultative Group (UDCG) October 17<sup>th</sup> 2018, the CoN provided comments from the UDCG to the proponent. As a consequence, the proponent's architecture team undertook a review of the project and amended the design to accommodate the two main points as indicated below.

According to the minutes of the UDCG meeting of 17 October 2018, the summary recommendation of the Group was as follows:

*'The proposed use for the site and the design concept and massing are generally supported. The above comments relating to planning, amenity and aesthetics should be addressed and resolved before the proposal is submitted for approval.'*

While the UDCG generally supported the massing strategy proposed, and the modern façade expressions of the new buildings on either side of the former courthouse, concerns were raised regarding the aesthetic expression of the new buildings.

The following extracts from the minutes is relevant:

1. *'The proposed buildings have a strong horizontal massing which is not in keeping with the character of the courthouse, or the urban fabric of this part of the city (look at the proportions of the terraces on Church Street). A combination of horizontal and vertical massing is needed in the façade to be a better fit with the area.'*

In response to the above point 1, the facade design of the two new buildings either side of the existing historic courthouse has been refined to provide a mix of both horizontal and vertical detail elements to respond the varying character of the neighbouring built environment.

In particular, banks of vertical blades on each of the new buildings divides their frontages and reduces the apparent length of their overall profiles while giving definition to their elevations and echoing the proportional breakup of the former courthouse facade. As well, the vertical blades in conjunction with their horizontal battened

counterparts provide a softening detail to the building facades and reflect the fine detailing of the former courthouse while also referencing the traditional architecture of Japan.

We believe these changes to the new building elevations satisfies the intent of the UDCG's request for a combination of horizontal and vertical massing in the facade to be a better fit with the area.

2. *'The façade expression is relatively similar for both the dormitory and the teaching buildings. While the two should (as the architects propose) have a similar language of texture, colour and materiality, the UDCG suggests that the next stage the different functions of the two could be expressed. As such, a smaller scale, richer façade might be found in the dormitory building, while a slightly larger scale, more commercially expressed version of the façade might be developed for the teaching building.'*

The applicants were encouraged to continue developing the façade design (in materiality, detail, texture of colour) to present the impression of an important educational building in an urban setting.

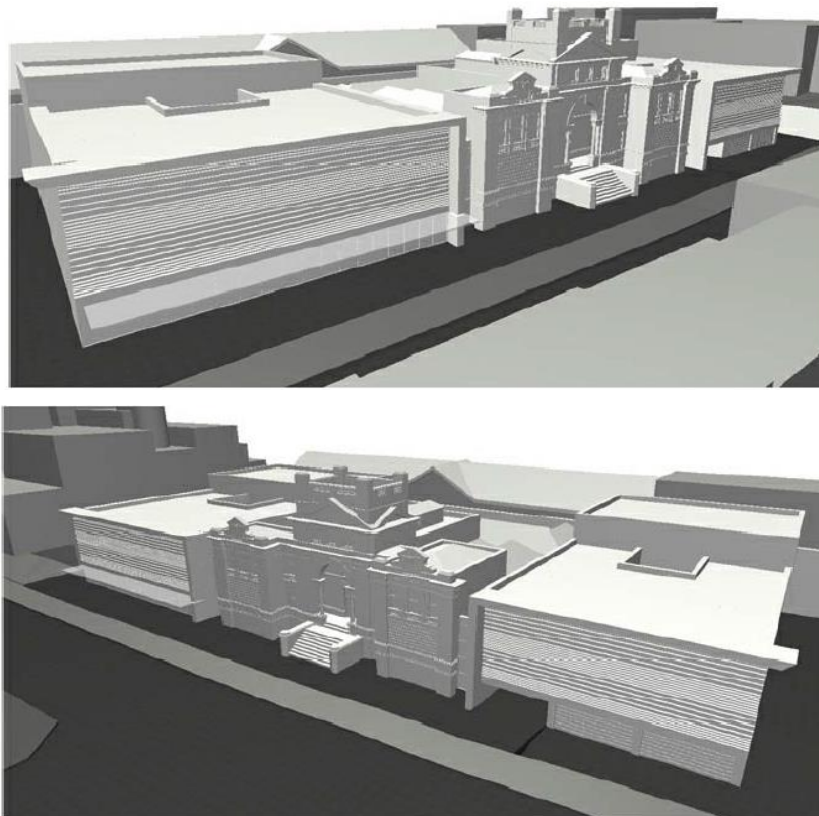
Based on an examination of the submitted plans it would appear that the design of the development has been modified in response to some of the above comments. However, it would be helpful if the applicant could provide a written narrative which provides specific details of the design changes made in this regard.

In response to the above point 2, the facade design for the two new buildings either side of the existing historic courthouse has been varied so that they each appear different in detail yet maintain a similar architectural language.

The refined design has arranged the break-up of the banks of vertical blades on the eastern dormitory building as similarly proportioned facade elements, while the design on the western teaching building presents the vertical blades as column-like elements along the length of the facade. The equally proportioned break-up to the eastern building elevation reflects a more enclosed and protected frontage along with punch window fenestration for the residents of the dormitory, while the broader position of the column blades and large commercial style glazing on the western building demonstrates the open nature of the learning environment within.

### Previous north elevation façade design presented at UDCG meeting on October 17th 2018 – “Symmetric Horizontal” scheme





**Current north elevation façade elevation design (as submitted):**





We believe these changes to the new building elevations satisfies the intent of the UDCG's request for the different functions of the two buildings being expressed. If there are any questions regarding the above information, please don't hesitate to contact the undersigned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KDaunt'.

Katherine Daunt

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