

Jennifer Sams,  
366 Abercrombie Street,  
Darlington, NSW 2008

Major Projects Assessment,  
Department of Planning & Infrastructure,  
GPO Box 39,  
Sydney NSW 2001.

**Attention: Director, Metropolitan and Regional Projects North**

Name of Application: *University of Sydney Abercrombie Precinct Redevelopment*  
Application No: *MP07\_0158*

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to object to the above Development Application for the following reasons:-

1. **Site Selection** – the University has not demonstrated that it has considered sites on the main Camperdown Campus for this development which would have a lesser impact on residential Darlington. The University should consider a green site swap where green space on the main campus would be used for the development and the Abercrombie site would become green space – benefiting students and the local community alike.
2. **Scale of Development** – Abercrombie Street is predominantly 2 storey Victorian houses. The scale and look of the buildings in this development are totally inappropriate in our heritage suburb. The current University buildings on this street, such as Mandelbaum House, are of a similar height and complement the existing scale of the street. The new buildings proposed, up to 9 levels in total (7 above ground), will dwarf the Victorian terraces both with their scale and harsh design. The buildings should be set back from the street and reduced in height to reflect the size of existing University buildings on Abercrombie Street.
3. **Heritage** – the architecture of Darlington is predominantly of the Victorian era and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The design of the University's proposed development is overbearing in both size and appearance and is not keeping with the heritage nature of the streetscape.
4. **Population Impact** – Darlington is a suburb of only 2100 people. The Abercrombie Precinct Development (APD) would introduce a further 5000 students in addition to the 2500 students already at the existing Business School. This massive increase would adversely impact on Darlington - one of Sydney's smallest suburbs.

5. **Traffic** – the traffic volume on Darlington’s Victorian era streets is relatively high already because of University traffic. Building the development on the main campus, with appropriate underground parking, would keep University traffic on main arterial roads, such as City Road, and off Darlington’s residential streets.
6. **Parking**– the car parking facility proposed for this development is unnecessary. If any development is to go ahead on this site then no car park should be built at all.

Firstly, the University has an abundance of public transport feeding into the area in the form of buses and trains and should encourage staff and students to use it. Secondly, many of the streets in Darlington and surrounding suburbs are now made for cyclists to use safely and the plans going forward for Darlington and other nearby suburbs are for them to become pedestrian and cycle friendly villages.

Finally, the University has a car park at the Seymour Centre just 5 minutes walk away from the APD site and it never reaches capacity. In fact our observations show that it is mostly only two thirds full on any given day. Therefore, the car park and the access road to it are not at all necessary.
7. **Pedestrian safety** – the University intends to place the access road to the development on Abercrombie Street, despite past promises by the Vice Chancellor that it would be moved to Darlington Lane for safety reasons. Darlington Public School is only 80 metres from the proposed access road entrance. Many children from Darlington Public School walk to and from school past the access road entrance. Having the access road entrance on Abercrombie Street would pose an unacceptably high risk of injury or death to young children. Any access road to the development should be moved to Darlington Lane, Codrington Street or Rose Street.

The University has responded to this by saying that it proposes to construct a pathway between University buildings already on Abercrombie Street and the large new buildings behind them for schoolchildren to access the primary school. This would be unacceptable because it is contrary to Stranger Danger rules – “Stay on the heavily travelled streets, where there is lots of activity.”

Schoolchildren should be able to walk along Abercrombie Street where they can be clearly seen without being endangered by the traffic using an access road. With this development, the intersection of Abercrombie and Codrington Streets becomes a conflict between multitudes of pedestrians, a significant number being international students who do not seem to understand nor follow our road rules and cars. Currently students who attend Sydney University by train walk down Abercrombie Street and then into the University via Shepherd Street. With this development these students will be walking down Abercrombie Street to Codrington Street cutting across the flow of cars proceeding to park on the Abercrombie Street entrance. There is nothing in this development proposal that will safeguard the safety of pedestrians at that intersection.

The University has also said that it cannot locate the access road entrance on Codrington Street as “Codrington Street is currently under investigation as a possible location for the future light rail system” and that the development has “a pedestrian and cyclist activity focus” on Codrington Street.

Light rail does not currently exist on Codrington Street and there is no evidence to suggest it will in the medium term. It should therefore not be considered in this

design. Even if it were to be built, there is no reason why cars and light rail cannot share the road as they do in Hay Street in the city where cars use the same road to access a car park on Parker Street, Haymarket.

With regard to pedestrian access and amenity space at the main entrance of the development, the site layout can be amended to move the driveway to one side or other of the “front door” with sufficient room for pedestrian access and amenity space.

I do not believe that a currently non-existent light rail or the pedestrian access and amenity space at the main entrance are good enough reasons to put young children or students at risk by placing the access road entrance on Abercrombie Street next to the school.

8. **Impact on existing buildings** – If this development proceeds then there will be extensive excavation works taking place on the site as well as an extensive period of time for the construction. The University should undertake and provide high-level Dilapidation Reports by suitably qualified structural engineers to all owners of all residences in Abercrombie Street and Darlington Road before any work begins. The University should also guarantee that it will cover all costs related to any damage to human health, education, building structures, trees and other flora, and goods owned by residents, caused by the work.
9. **Student Housing** – The revised plans show Student Housing on Abercrombie Street adjacent to the Primary School from the ground level to level 4, making it 5 storeys high, with a total floor area of 6858sqm. According to the University, a further 200 students will be living on Abercrombie Street.  
Mandelbaum House will be dwarfed by the height and scale of this building which will sit adjacent to it on Abercrombie Street. This building also does not in any way fit in with the heritage terrace houses opposite it.  
We would like to see the student housing reduced in its size so that it is no taller than Mandelbaum House and re-designed in a way to fit in sympathetically with the heritage streetscape.
10. **Impact on environment** – There are several Mechanical cooling and heating towers proposed to service this development. It is likely that at least some of this plant equipment will be operating 24 hours per day. The noise from this kind of plant equipment is likely to interfere with the sleep of local residents and therefore their quality of life. This is not acceptable to the residents of Darlington. No-one should have to tolerate this kind of disruption to their lives.
11. **Construction times** – The hours of operations on the construction site are planned to be:

Monday to Friday 7:00am – 7:00pm

Saturday 7:00am – 5:00pm

No work Sundays and Public Holidays

The City of Sydney’s hours of operations for any construction site in the Darlington area are:

Monday to Friday 7:30am – 5:30pm

Saturday 7:30am – 3:30pm

No work Sundays and Public Holidays

We must insist that the hours of operation during construction comply with those of the City of Sydney.

I trust that you will take my objections into consideration when making your assessment of this application.

Yours faithfully,

*Jennifer Sams.*