

Re: MP 07_0158 MOD 2 - Abercrombie Street Precinct
Comments and concerns

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your assistance and comments re above Project and for the link to updated plans. Many questions arise from this revised project. Many aspects could not be addressed at the time of the community consultation as few details were provided and bore no relation to the initial plans submitted in 2011. One of the main criticism was the overall bunker aspect, which needed to be broken down. We only had a single plan (with no elevation) to go by during consultation and we were left in the dark as to many aspects of the new plans.

I have consulted other residents and they have summarized our main concerns. Here they are first, below, in case you have not received them. I would also like to submit some details of my own concerns with these new plans further down.

Please find in attachment an extract from Appendix 5, for reference, showing that the new structure is in fact twice as high as Mandelbaum House and that the plants on the roof are in full view of residents.

I will be at the meeting at the Service Building tomorrow at 6pm to discuss these concerns.

Best regards,

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SUMMARY:

Some points of concern which have already been made in regard to the Modification Request are as follows:-

- There is great concern that the conditions B9, D1 and G1 related to green star are being deleted. These conditions specifically refer to the building achieving a 5 star green star rating (4 star = Best Practice, 5 star = Australian Excellence, 6 star = World Leader).

We do not believe these conditions should be deleted or watered down in any way. The onus should be on the University of Sydney as one of the leading educational establishments in the world to set high standards in regard to environmental sustainability.

- The proposed cafe in the APD should not be on the ground level of the B pod of the K-shaped building pointing into Abercrombie Street. It will bring with it increased noise, a large increase in the number of pedestrians on Abercrombie Street, and will generate an excessive amount of rubbish. The cafe should be internal to the APD and well away from Abercrombie Street or at least contained within the A pod which points towards Codrington Street and the Sports Centre.

- There is also mention in the description of the modifications about the “re-orientation of pods A and B fronting Codrington Street”. The angle of the 2 pods is proposed to be more acute therefore closing in on large Sydney Blue Gum tree which the conditions stipulated should be retained. Does this mean that there will be a negative effect on the tree?
- From the plans there seems to be a proposed change which indicates another storey housing a dining area on level 4 in the C pod of the K-shaped building to the north of Mandelbaum House. This was not there on the plan contained in the Preferred Project Report. The John Holland plans also indicate that there is an increase in the floor area on both A and B pods on level 4.
- All open terraces on the B and C pods in the APD which are oriented towards residents’ houses on Abercrombie Street will cause much disturbance to local residents, just like the proposed cafe, and should therefore be moved to the side of the building facing the existing Economics and Business building and/or be closed for use after 6pm.
- We are concerned about the use of the building outside of business hours generally and need to have the University inform us as to their intentions in this regard. We do not want unnecessary lighting and further noise generated into the neighbourhood after business hours.
- There is mention in the description of the modifications of the “consolidation and centralisation of rooftop plant”. Is it better that all plant is centralised? It is important that we find out what sort of noise will be generated from the rooftop plant and how it will be managed.
- Along with the concerns we have in regard to rooftop plant noise, we need to know about how the water from underground tanks will be pumped through the building. Will there be vibrations generated which will impact on our neighbourhood and possibly have long term and detrimental effects on our homes? How will this be managed?
- What are the amendments to the landscape and public domain design? We need to know what effects and /or changes this will have for residents and the whole community.
- In regard to wheelchair access – what sort of access is there on and around the site? What is the access from Darlington Lane?
- We need to know whether there are any other modifications apart from those listed.

DETAILS OF MY MAIN CONCERNS:

NOISE IMPACT

All the Power Plants and noise generating operations or activities seem to be directed towards the residents. This is likely to cause maximum disturbance to the neighbourhood. Here are some of the areas that have been spotted on the plans:

POWER PLANT:

Power plant on the roof of both structures will be in direct line of sight from terraces in Abercrombie St and directly next to Mandelbaum House. No matter the amount of sound insulation, it will be impossible to prevent the continuous droning of the equipment at night. All air con in adjoining properties must be turned off at night (Royal Hotel and Spinifex Design Office). For years, I had to remind the workers at the computer centre and service building manager to keep the soundproof doors closed to prevent the ear splitting noise from the generators inside the plant room. Then the Uni installed a 100dBm generator (as shown on the plate) on the lawn facing my house. You don't need a degree to be that offensive.

It is impossible to work or relax with the low vibrations this produces. Studies carried out in the last 50 years have shown cause tiredness and even death (7Hz). Has a sound engineer looked at this?

FIRE CONTROL CENTRE:

When the Economics Building started operation the Fire protection system was being tested every Friday morning with the horrendous scream of the unmuffled pump exhaust on the facade of the building. It took one year to fix this problem. On Appendix 5_ KNF-BUS-ARC-DWG-A2200-F.pdf it shows that the Fire control centre is also facing our homes. I assume that the motors, pumps, machinery will be there. Can we ensure that the doors to this centre do not face our homes. This is a slap in the face of residents. Again: how could architects be so oblivious to basic requirements - unless, of course, they are fully aware of the noise it will generate and made sure it will not affect them but could not care less for neighbours.

AIR INTAKE PLENNUM:

On the lawn facing Abercrombie St (and my home). Would not this produce a lot of noise? Can this be checked and addressed

CAFÉ:

The café is shown facing Abercrombie St. Students are some of the most noisy and offensive people with pub patrons. They can scream at over 100dB at all time of day and night and placing a terrace opposite terraces - that face north i.e. with the only sunlit side facing the street - will cause great disturbance. I had to get the footway tables at the Royal moved around the corner into Codrington St (facing Buon Gusto restaurant) away from houses to get some peace... after 12 years of hell.

Residential homes must be shielded from the activities at the café. Furthermore, the exposure would be much better for patrons facing East than South, which would be on the dark side all year round. Facing the café South would have the double whammy of noise disturbance for neighbours and poor sun exposure for patrons. Surely an architect should be able to see that.

DINING AND SEATING - TERRACE

Appendix 5_ KNF-BUS-ARC-DWG-A2207-F.pdf

This is also facing directly in front of houses in Abercrombie St. From previous experience with parties on the top terrace at Mandelbaum House, this will cause noise disturbance to residents. The visual screen around the building will not prevent noise spreading. Is this terrace open to the outside? What soundproofing will be provided? We cannot have the noise of screaming kids reverberating around the neighbourhood. I am very concerned by the suggestion that there will be a terrace facing South towards my home. Couldn't it be facing North, which would again provide better exposure and noise reduction?

ALL NOISE generating equipment is directed towards residential homes and must be shielded to prevent disturbance to residents.

ELEVATION VIEW FROM ABERCROMBIE ST:

Appendix 5_ KNF-BUS-ARC-DWG-A3000-F.pdf

The above drawing (see extract attached) shows that the new building dwarfs Mandelbaum House. As it is directly North, it causes massive overshadowing in winter for Abercrombie St residents, as shown on the diagram, Appendix 5_ KNF-BUS-ARC-DWG-A8002-E-SHADOW DIAGRAMS WINTER

SOLSTICE JUNE 21.pdf. The size and bulk (like gigantic shoe boxes with very busy facade is completely out of character with the streetscape. This horrendous and industrial looking structure must be shielding from the view from Abercrombie St, either by trees or some building along Abercrombie St of similar or lower height than Mandelbaum House, which was a model of what should have been built on this site, facing residential terraces. It completely destroys the character of our street and looks menacing, making us feel like refugees in our street. Furthermore it appears that the building bulk is exacerbated by additional cladding, which not only unnecessarily enlarge the appearance but does not seem to provide protection against noise mentioned above.

END OF MY SUBMISSION