

NSW Government  
Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)  
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20 July 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

[http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view\\_job&job\\_id=7894](http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=7894)

**Re: The University of Sydney: Camperdown-Darlington Campus**  
Proposed Chau Chak Wing Museum & Associated Campus Domain Works  
(proposed building)

I write in response to the Chau Chuk Wing Museum proposal by the University of Sydney, and the associated submission to the DPE. This letter objects outright to any proposal for a building in the area east of the Main University Buildings, being 'The Great Hall and the Eastern Range of the Quadrangle' (the item) and supports all reasons set out below as to why it should not go ahead. It addresses specifically the 'Proposed Museum Site Landscape assessment,' 2016, by CAB Consulting (the report).

The report does not explain how the heritage value of the item is to be conserved, or enhanced, by the proposed development. It does not support the qualities of the new design as sympathetic in form and finish nor support that it is respectful of its context. It does not refer to the seven criteria used to define heritage significance in NSW or how the item's heritage value is to be retained. The report does not supply an argument as to why a proposed building is a viable solution. It does not list the negative impacts the building will have on the item. Its methodology does not reference the Burra Charter. Its rationale for ranking the significance of the study area is not outlined. In all the report presents an argument with little supportive evidence for downgrading the significance of the area where the building is to be located.

The report states that due to time constraints its research was limited. Critical historical information therefore that supports why this area *should not ever be built upon* and its significance as 'exceptional' is missing. This evidence is outlined below. It connects the earliest decisions about the University's spatial design to the area of ground under threat.

In 1854, representatives of the University's Senate 'Building Committee' visited the proposed building site of the Main University Buildings. They wanted to see for themselves if the site was fit for its intended noble purpose but they encountered a problem. The grant boundary, as it was proposed, followed the line of the ridge (today's Eastern Avenue), they reported that it:

*was calculated to destroy the effect of the building ...from the fact it cut off a great portion of the Hill, on the summit of which the site for the buildings was fixed*<sup>1</sup>

To remedy this inadequacy, it was resolved, to acquire all the slopes immediately in front of the buildings and grounds up to what is now City Road. This decision was to safeguard the landscape setting for the Main University Building as an impressive presentation. This act was to ensure the University, in perpetuity, would be viewed to dramatic effect *on approach* from the city. This acquisition protected the spatial structure, the key views in and out of the University particularly from the Hill focused on the dramatic skyline effect of its Gothic inspired building complex. This spatial arrangement was and still is, a powerful inspiration to Australian educational ideals and community values.

The proposed Chau Chak Wing building would diminish this significant 'designed' layout, this first gesture, the earliest landscape planning decision at the heart of the University's exceptional significance and cultural landscape.

In the landscape character analysis of the report, Section 4.1, the discussion does not address the context of the study area as a vital component of an expanded curtilage, specifically that the site is located on the slopes of a prominent hill and that this landform though modified still interprets the original design intent of the place. In Section 4.2, Visual and Spatial Structure, the report does not acknowledge all significant views to and from the item. Photos of these are provided below. In Section 5.0, Significance, the report refutes the exceptional significance of the study area by focusing on its present use. Notwithstanding its exceptional significance as part of a designed landscape, the report does not acknowledge the significance of the Women's Tennis Courts (Courts) in continual use since 1911 sanctioned in the *masterplan by Professor Wilkinson* which evoked the *pursuit of beauty* an Interwar aesthetic philosophy that guided the development of the grounds, and its architectural development. These mark the admission of women to the University in 1881. Sporting and leisure facilities for the swelling student population began around the turn of the twentieth century and the need for segregated common rooms and separate spaces for sporting activities reflected the social mores of the times and is why these courts were built and are essential interpretive elements.

Markers of women's spaces are rare on campus and the proposed building, sited inappropriately at the heart of this exceptional, culturally significant landscape, is on the same footprint as the Courts and Clubhouse. The obliteration of the Courts, given their significance, is another patriarchal attempt to devalue and not

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<sup>1</sup> Sydney University Archives G1/4/1, *Building Committee Minutes No. 2*, period: 1854-1862, pp.6 -9.



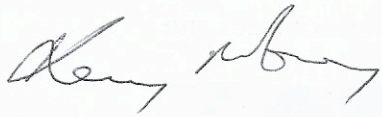
recognise the struggle women still face for equal rights in many fields.

The report's argument devalues the significance of the study area to moderate by stating it is a built element in the centre of a former open space. It does not acknowledge that the Courts and its small Clubhouse were careful additions to the slopes and particularly that due to their minimal visual impact, the fences being permeable, they do not reduce the exceptional significance of the designed landscape, nor are they solid built elements as implied.

It is my opinion that the existing use of the place as courts where the proposed building is sited is a compatible use with the exceptional significance of the landscape setting for the Main University Buildings. The proposed building as a replacement however will be detrimental to the heritage significance and exceptional character of the University of Sydney and should be rejected.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Kerry Moloney', written in a cursive style.

Kerry Moloney





**Figure 1:** *Quadrangle Precinct* view looking north east over the lawns of University Place to the Fisher Tennis Centre, terraced into the sloped catchment landscape of trees and lawn, note the permeable tennis court fences, 2013)



**Figure 2:** *Tennis centre*, looking west, over the sloped lawns and terraced courts upwards to the East Range and Great Hall, note that the University's main Buildings can be appreciated from this viewpoint. (Source: Fisher Tennis Centre website).



