

NSW Government
Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)
23-33 Bridge Street,
Sydney NSW 2000.

Email: information@planning.nsw.gov.au

19 July 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

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)

The Australian Garden History Society is the lead national advocate for conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action. This submission is made on behalf of the Sydney and Northern NSW Branch. The Chau Chuk Wing Museum building proposal, is an unsympathetic attempt to undermine the foundation significance of the University's cultural landscape. The exceptional significance of the landscape, as one extensive parkland, will be ruptured should the proposed building go ahead. Those spaces threatened include the Botany Lawn, University Place, the University's main entry area off Parramatta Road, Victoria Park, and all those green open spaces between the Main University Buildings and City Road, termed the interpretative grounds for the Main University Buildings. The Women's Tennis Courts, located in these grounds, over which the building is proposed, is greatly threatened.

The proposed building, and its vehicular underground entry is in conflict with the designed main entry to the University off Parramatta Road and its gatehouse, Baxters Lodge, the counterpoint to this significant landscape.

The proposed building will have an unacceptable impact on the University of Sydney as a State Heritage Registered listed item (under consideration), and the University of Sydney Conservation Area. It doesn't comply therefore with the heritage objectives and controls of *Sydney LEP 2012*; and the *Sydney Heritage DCP*, for the following reasons:

- ☒ Any building, is **inappropriate in the designated location**, because the area is graded to be of 'exceptional significance' as **per the Grounds Conservation Plan (GCP) 2015**, and as such the parkland setting of the grounds, should not be impinged upon by any building form because the significance of

the place lies in conserving the connective tissue of its green open space.

- ☒ The proposal seeks to degrade the exceptional significance of the first University buildings, and the exceptional visual, spatial and sensory qualities of its setting. It does this by:
 - siting the new building adjacent to, and in direct competition with, the Eastern Front of the Quadrangle and the Great Hall.
 - severing the connection of the significant buildings, the Eastern Front of the Quadrangle and the Great Hall, with its setting.
 - rupturing the green open space **of this setting, that collectively, tells the significant story of human interaction with the place over time.** Stories that connect to the Kangaroo Grounds (Victoria Park); the Aboriginal Community, and that date to the origins of the European settlement and first landscape planning gestures by Governor Arthur Phillip. These reserved lands, that later became Grose Farm, in 1855 were granted to the University. The custodians and communities of the University, and the designers that overlaid meaning to the landscape and built fabric of the first University of Sydney buildings, are not respected by this proposal.
 - impacting this urban parkland setting with **a building that alters the** proportional balance and visual dominance of soft surroundings over built elements.
 - **not maintaining the sense of a continuous urban oasis and view corridor** running between the University and Park, that impacts beyond its boundaries.
- ☒ The proposed building, in mass and scale, will:
 - **eclipse, dominate and overshadow the historical landscape quality of the immediate landscape surrounds, and setting of** the significant first Main buildings.
 - **impact** the air space above the (existing) Courts by blocking what is already a narrow view corridor, a last fragment of the original connection between the University and Victoria Park.
- ☒ The proposed building, contemporary in form, has a white concrete box as its dominant finish. This material, readily identifiable, does not:
 - complement the existing historic architecture of this precinct and does not sit comfortably within the Conservation Area, Quadrangle Precinct and Victoria Park where the dominant materials are 19th Century original fabric.
 - deliver a valid response to the parkland setting, its mass will be unacceptably visible from the public domain.
- ☒ Infrastructure to support any proposed building particularly that of a museum, has not been accounted for in the proposal. **Impacts that have not been considered, include that of:**
 - **transport access** especially for buses, vehicular access for parking, waste, delivering exhibitions, disability access, and other services requiring vehicular access.
- ☒ The proposed building, will unacceptably **erode and conflict with any remaining landscape** surround-

ing the proposed building, and the green open space nearby, particularly on the adjacent, mature fig avenue, lawns, and other nearby trees and planting. It will cause changes:

- to environmental conditions, which will cause:
 - overshadowing, leading to failure of plant material.
 - altered wind patterns, likely to lead to branch failure and the decline of much of the mature canopied trees near the proposal.
- Due to transport access impacts causing soil compaction issues to existing trees.
- ☒ Viewing angles towards the proposed site and from the public domain are such that most of the proposed building, will be visible from:
 - within the Approach Reserve in Victoria Park,
 - the Quadrangle Precinct within the university,
 - near its main entrance with Parramatta Road and from the heritage listed Baxters Lodge.
- ☒ That the Macleay Building, purpose built to hold the internationally significant Macleay Natural History Collection, will be stripped of its collection reduces the significance of the Macleay Building, its Collection and generally that of the University.

The public open space, particularly the green open space that encompasses the Botany Lawn, University Place, the Women's Tennis Courts, the University Main Entry, the Approach, the Avenue of Figs and associated significant trees, planting and landscape features such as the pond and bridge in Victoria Park, and significant built elements that contribute to this landscape including the Gardeners Lodge and Baxter Lodge, and the extended Historical Curtilage of the University in which this proposed building will impact, are all compromised, by this proposal.

It is disingenuous to suggest that the proposed building will have little to low impact on the landscape immediately surrounding the proposed building and extending further into the grounds of the University, Victoria Park and beyond its boundaries. The AGHS strongly recommends that the proposed building not go ahead, and that the Minister, and the Heritage Council reject this proposal.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

**Executive Committee
Sydney & Northern NSW Branch
Australian Garden History Society**