



***MODIFICATION REQUEST:  
Sydney University Abercrombie  
Precinct Redevelopment  
Cnr Codrington Street and Abercrombie  
Street  
(MP07\_0158 MOD 3)***

- Modification to the Student Accommodation Building



Director-General's  
Environmental Assessment Report  
Section 75W of the  
*Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*  
1979

February 2014

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report is an assessment of a modification application (MP07\_0158 MOD 3) lodged by The University of Sydney (the proponent). The application seeks to modify the approved student accommodation building to provide a more cost effective design while ensuring that the quality and functionality of the project is improved.

The site is located at the corner of Abercrombie Street and Codrington Street, Darlington, at the University of Sydney's Darlington Campus, within the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA). The student accommodation building site has a primary frontage towards Abercrombie Street.

The application seeks approval to amend the approved student accommodation building. Key changes include:

- modifications to the design, including the building footprint and façade;
- modifications to the internal configuration and provision of 12 extra beds;
- relocation of the ground floor café;
- removal of the vehicle access off Abercrombie Street; and
- modifications to the layout of the basement.

In accordance with section 75X(2)(f) of the EP&A Act, the modification application was made publically available on the department's website from Monday 28 October 2013, and council, relevant public authorities and previous submitters were notified in writing.

The department received submissions from the City of Sydney Council (council) and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) and 46 submissions from the general public and community groups. The key issues raised in submissions relate to building setbacks, bulk and scale, student numbers, landscaping and public domain impacts, amenity impacts, construction impacts and building sustainability.

The proponent submitted a Response to Submissions (RtS) report following exhibition of the modification application. The RtS included further details regarding building setback, landscaping and public domain treatment. No amendments to the modification application were proposed in the RtS.

The department has assessed the merits of the proposed modifications and considers the key issues associated with the proposal to be built form and urban design, landscaping and public domain, environment and residential amenity and ecologically sustainable development.

These issues have been assessed in detail and the department is satisfied that any potential impacts can be adequately mitigated and managed to achieve acceptable levels of environmental performance. The department therefore considers the proposed modification application to be in the public interest and that it should be approved, subject to conditions.



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## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Site Context

The Abercrombie Precinct Redevelopment site comprises 79 individual allotments as well as Rose Street and Boundary Lane, which are to be resumed into the site. The site is located at the southern end of the University's Darlington Campus and is bounded by Darlington Lane to the north, Codrington Street to the east, Abercrombie Street to the south and Darlington Public School to the west. The site is located within the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) and is approximately 2 km south west of Sydney CBD and immediately north of the North Eveleigh Concept Plan site. The location of the site is detailed in **Figure 1**.

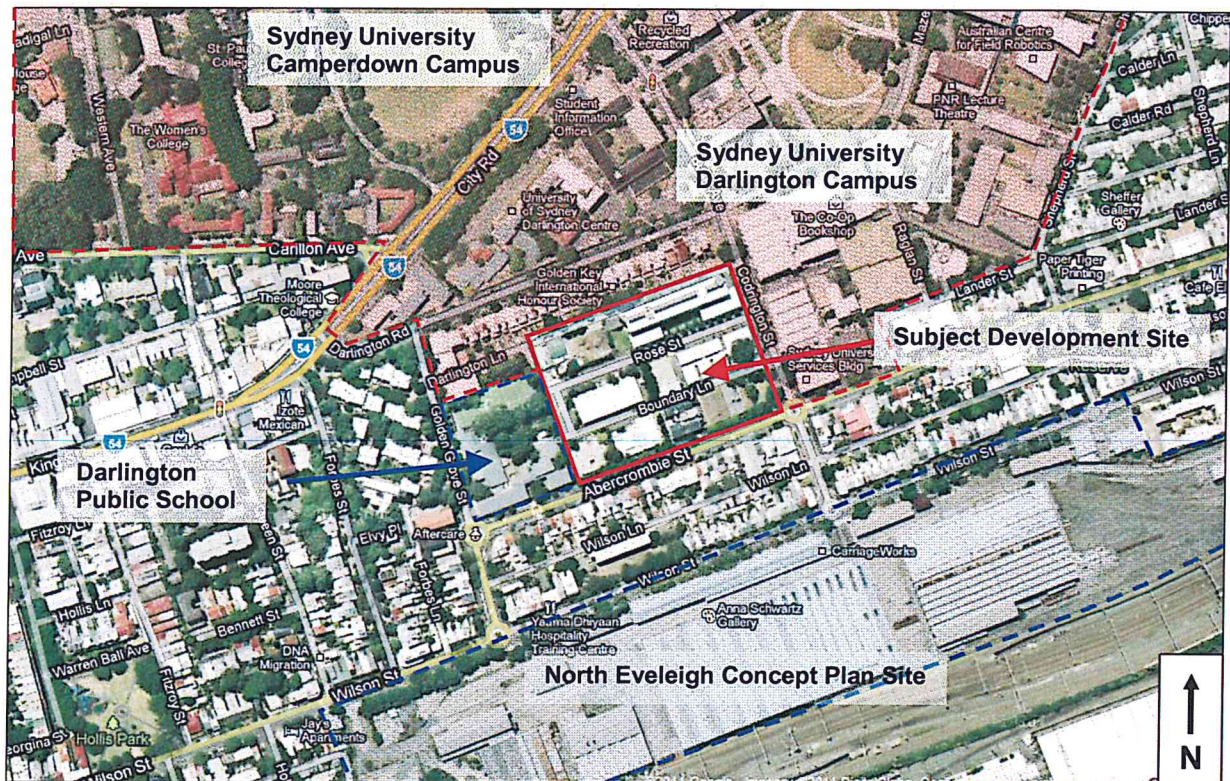


Figure 1: Existing Site Layout

### 1.2 Application History

On 16 November 2012, the NSW Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) approved Major Project MP07\_0158, subject to conditions. The project approval consists of the following:

- bulk earthworks;
- remediation;
- lot consolidation and subdivision;
- development of a new business school, ranging in height from four to six storeys and comprising 28,180 sqm of GFA;
- development of a three to five storey student accommodation building with 188 student beds and comprising 5,900 sqm of GFA;
- two level basement car park; and
- ancillary works.

Condition B4 of the approval required the basement car park entrance/driveway to be relocated from Abercrombie Street to a satisfactory alternative frontage due to concerns regarding pedestrian safety and traffic impacts. Basement vehicle access from Darlington Lane was subsequently approved by the department as the preferred location.

The approved project application is detailed in **Figures 2 to 4**.



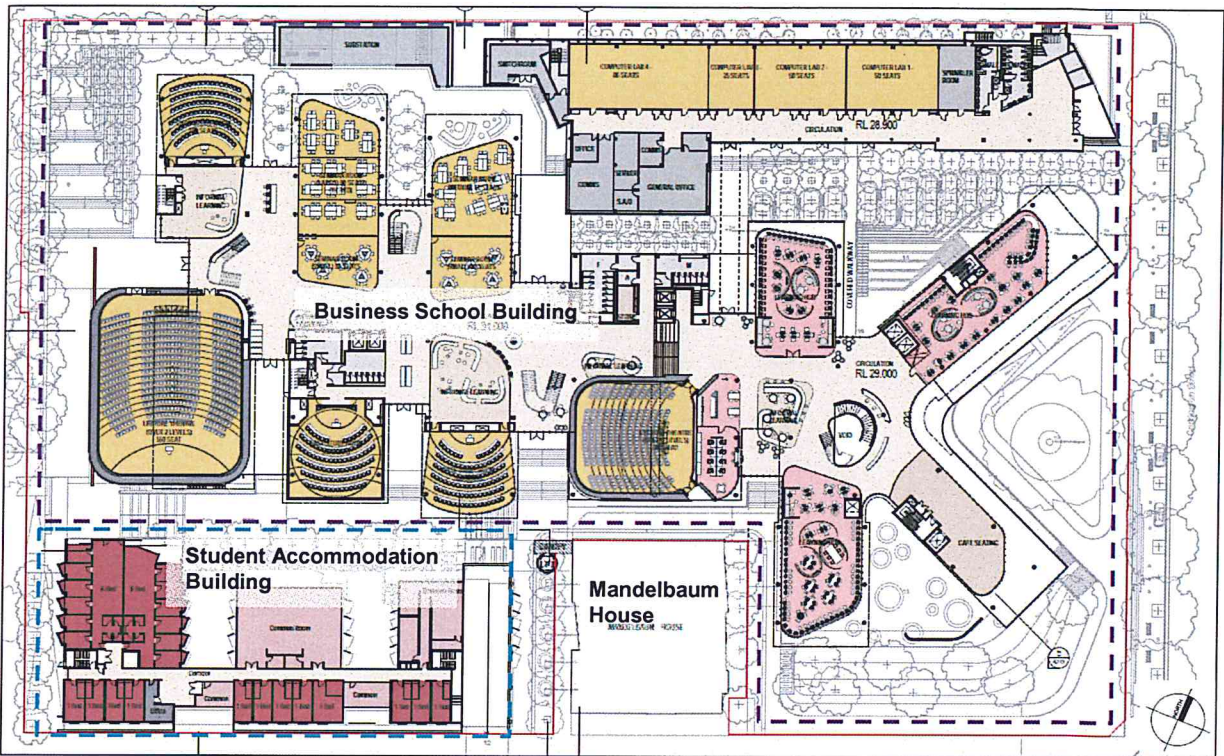


Figure 2: Approved Project Layout (Ground Floor Plan)

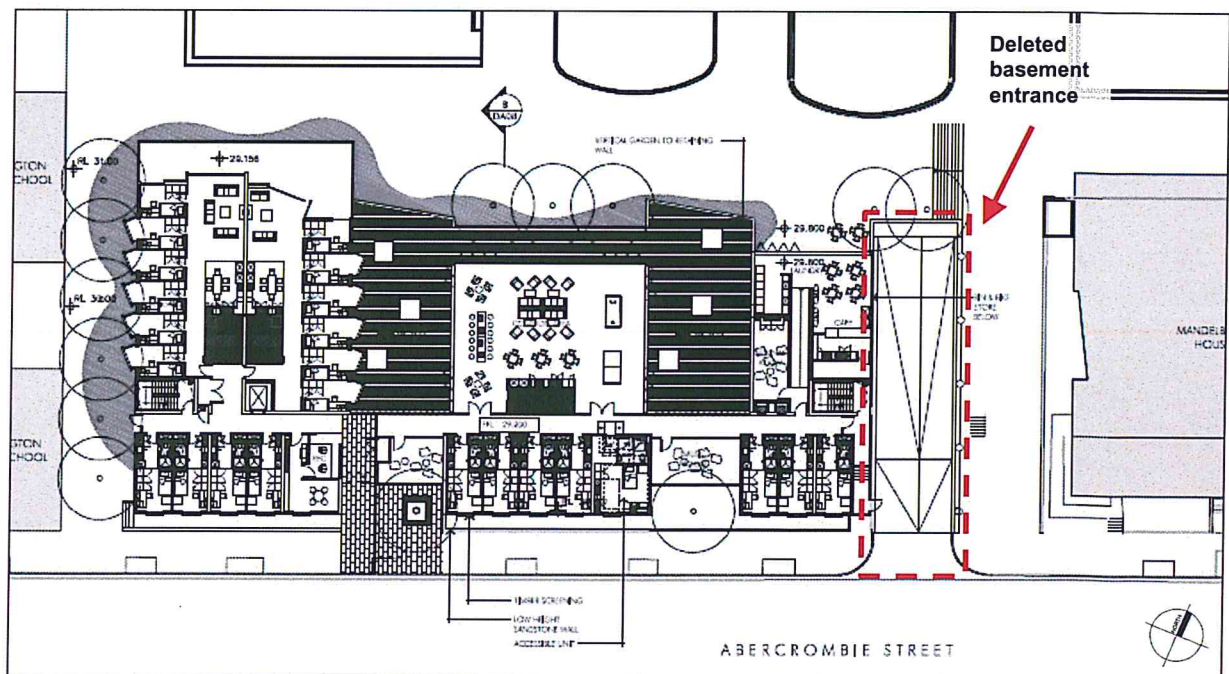


Figure 3: Approved Student Accommodation Building Layout (Ground Floor Plan)

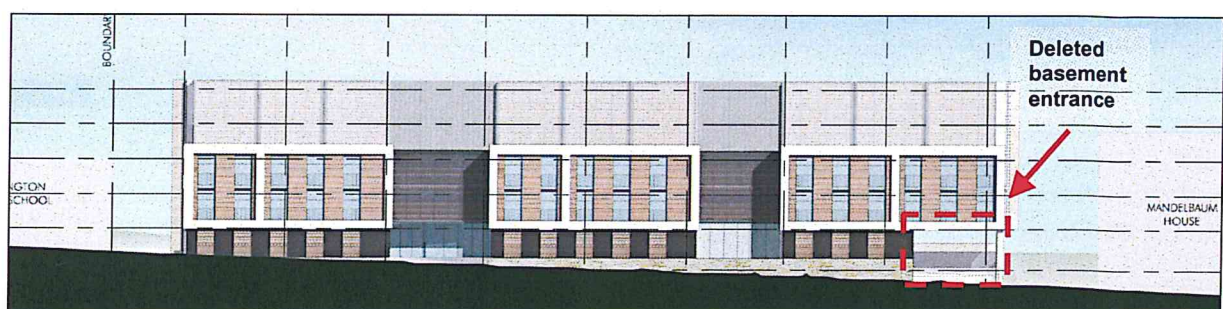


Figure 4: Approved Student Accommodation Building (Abercrombie Street Elevation)



On 21 June 2013, the then Director, Metropolitan and Regional Projects North, approved a modification application (MP07\_0158 MOD 1), submitted by the University of Sydney, which sought a two month extension to the submission deadline of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Strategy required by condition A7 of the project approval. The University sought the extension of time to enable comments received during community consultation to be reviewed in detail prior to finalising the Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Strategy.

On 1 August 2013, the University of Sydney lodged modification application MP07\_0158 MOD 2 seeking amendments to the approved business school building. This modification application was approved by the PAC on 14 February 2014.

Demolition and associated early works and site clearance approved under the original project application have commenced on site, including access arrangements and preparatory works for the basement car park. Notwithstanding this, these construction works are primarily associated with the approved business school building site, with the student accommodation site works having not yet commenced.

## 2. PROPOSED MODIFICATION

The proponent seeks approval to modify the student accommodation building component of the approval to improve the urban design and built form outcome of the development. The modifications proposed include:

- modifications to the design, including the building footprint and façade;
- modifications to the internal configuration and provision of 12 extra beds;
- relocation of the ground floor café;
- removal of the vehicle access off Abercrombie Street; and
- modifications to the layout of the basement.

Key amendments are outlined further below.

### *Building Façade Modifications*

The southern building façade is proposed to be modified to provide an improved response to the existing residential terraces on the southern side of Abercrombie Street. This will be achieved through the use of off-form concrete dividing up the façade that replicates the pattern of the terraces opposite.

The extent of glazing on the northern façade (facing internally towards the business school building) is proposed to be reduced due to the proposed removal of common room areas and the use of stained concrete panels and horizontal louvres.

### *Building Envelope Modifications*

Modifications to the building envelope are proposed in response to the required relocation of the basement car park entrance from Abercrombie Street to Darlington Lane (in accordance with condition B4 of the Instrument of Approval), with the built form redesigned to 'fill-in' the space beneath the eastern edge of the building which previously accommodated the basement driveway (see **Figures 4 and 6**).

The eastern and western wings of the building envelope are proposed to be narrowed, and the central and eastern wings lengthened to the north to allow for stair access and the relocation of the ground floor café (proposed within the central wing). The northern rear boundary is also proposed to be moved approximately 1.5 m further north (towards the business school building).



### Internal Layout Modifications

Proposed modifications to the internal layout include the relocation of the common areas to facilitate direct access to sunlight and/or views to the courtyard areas, relocation of the café and provision of direct stair access to the basement.

The relocation of the basement entrance from beneath the eastern edge of the building also allows for the proposed provision of 12 additional beds, increasing the total number of beds to 200.

### *Landscape Design Modifications*

The landscaping scheme for the development is proposed to be modified in response to the proposed modifications to the building envelope and relocation of the basement entrance from Abercrombie Street.

In place of the basement entrance, a new secure pedestrian access ramp is proposed with associated landscaping adjacent to Mandelbaum House. Modifications are also proposed to the courtyard areas in response to the modified building envelope.

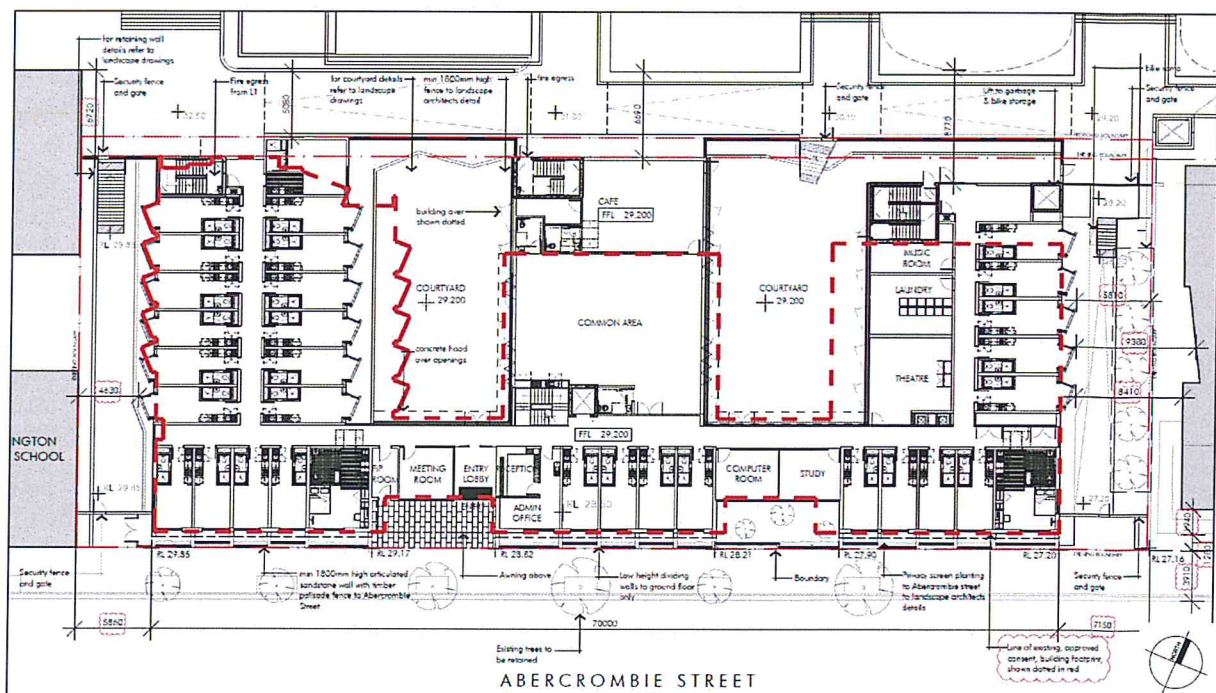
### Relocation of Ground Floor Café

The approved ground floor café is proposed to be relocated from the western wing to the central wing to create a hub for the building and provide improved integration with the adjacent business school building.

### Modifications to Layout of Basement

The approved basement level is proposed to be modified to accommodate a lift and relocated stair access to the ground floor. Bicycle storage capacity is also proposed to be increased from 31 to 50 bicycle parking spaces.

The proposed amended student accommodation building is detailed in **Figures 5 to 9**.



**Figure 5: Proposed Ground Floor Layout (approved outline shown in red)**



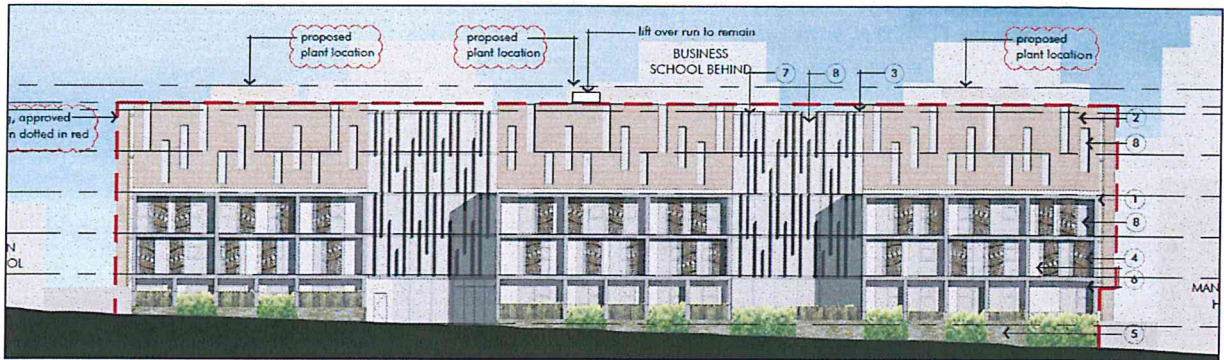


Figure 6: Proposed Abercrombie Street Elevation (approved outline shown in red)

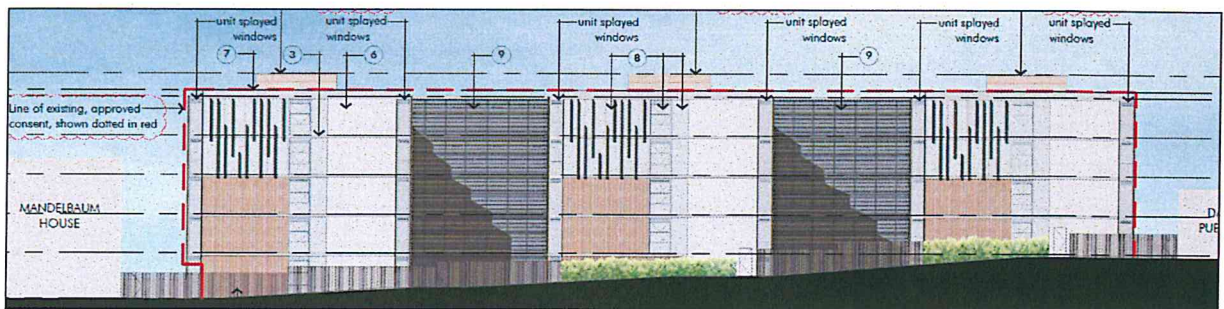


Figure 7: Proposed Northern Elevation (approved outline shown in red)

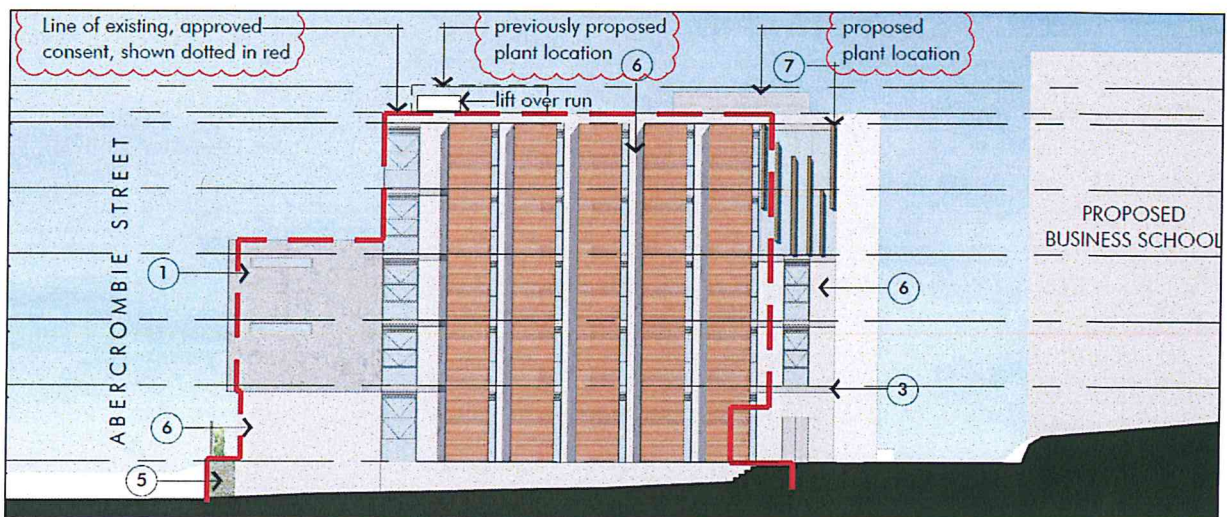


Figure 8: Proposed Eastern Elevation (approved outline shown in red)

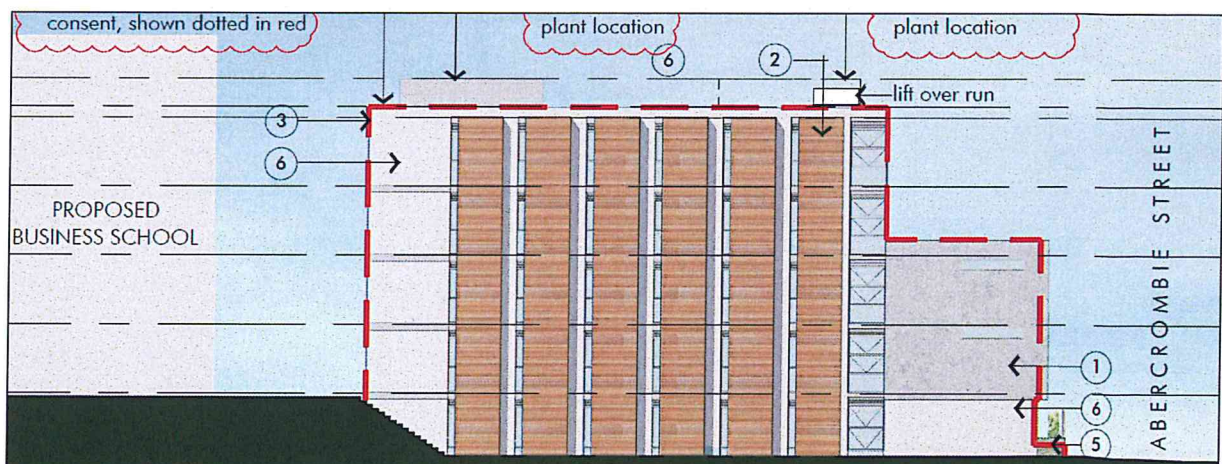


Figure 9: Proposed Western Elevation (approved outline shown in red)



### 3. STATUTORY CONTEXT

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#### 3.1 Modification of the Minister's Approval

In accordance with clause 3 of Schedule 6A of the EP&A Act, section 75W of the Act as in force immediately before its repeal on 1 October 2011 and as modified by Schedule 6A, continues to apply to transitional Part 3A projects.

Section 75W(2) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act) provides that a proponent may request the Minister to modify the Minister's approval of a project. The Minister's approval of a modification is not required if the approval of the project as modified would be consistent with the original approval. As the proposal involves modifications to the external and internal design of the approved student accommodation building, the modification will require the Minister's approval.

#### 3.2 Environmental Assessment Requirements

Section 75W(3) of the EP&A Act provides the Director-General with scope to issue Environmental Assessment Requirements (DGRs) that must be substantially complied with before the matter will be considered by the Minister. Environmental Assessment Requirements were not issued for this application as the proponent has addressed the key issues in the modification.

#### 3.3 Delegated Authority

The Minister has delegated his functions to determine Part 3A modification applications to the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) where an application has been made by persons other than by or on behalf of a public authority.

The modification application is being referred to the PAC for determination as over 25 submissions were received objecting to the proposal.

### 4. CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSIONS

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#### 4.1 Exhibition

Under Section 75X(2)(f) of the EP&A Act, the Director-General is required to make the modification application publicly available. The department publicly exhibited it from 28 October 2013 until 11 November 2013 on the department's website. The modification application was also notified to council, relevant agencies and previous submitters in writing. The department received submissions from council, RMS and 46 submissions from the general public. A summary of the issues raised in submissions is provided below.

#### 4.2 City of Sydney Submission

Council raised no objections to the proposed modifications, noting that the modifications provide improvements to the development. Notwithstanding, it still raised issues with respect to the building façade, building setback and landscaping. A summary of council's comments is provided as follows:

- council's specialist Urban Designer and Senior Heritage specialist are generally supportive of the proposed amendments, specifically the façade articulation and materiality;
- building and design features exacerbate the inconsistency in the building setback from Abercrombie Street with Mandelbaum House;
- the design of the lower scale frontage to Abercrombie Street better echoes the forms and proportions of the terraces opposite and is no longer 'institutional';
- a more careful selection of materials is required for the external ground floor wall and retaining wall due to their visual prominence;



- the proposed building footprint and envelope changes provide greater separation between the wings of the building and increase communal outdoor areas, which is supported;
- a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.7 m should be conditioned;
- the proposed relocation of the café will co-locate compatible uses, though the amenity of the additional student room in the eastern wing is questioned due to its proximity to the laundry, music room and theatre room;
- the interface between the Abercrombie Street public footway and private realm needs to be improved;
- the proposed front timber fence sited on top of the front retaining wall is not supported as it will negatively impact on the quality of the streetscape;
- the size of the proposed planting beds within the frontage are inadequate for the vegetation proposed and improved access for planting maintenance should be considered; and
- the proposed relocation of the basement entrance from Abercrombie Street is consistent with condition B4 and the pedestrianisation and landscaping of this area is supported.

### 4.3 Roads and Maritime Services

RMS raised no objections to the proposed modification.

### 4.4 Public Submissions

During exhibition, the department received 46 public submissions from surrounding residents and community groups, objecting to the proposed modification application. A summary of the issues raised is provided in **Table 2**, which also represents the issues raised as a percentage of the submissions received.

**Table 2: Public Submission Comments**

Issue	%
1. Any increase in student numbers should not be approved due to amenity and traffic impacts. The number of students should be scaled back.	72
2. The setback from Abercrombie Street is insufficient and inconsistent with existing setbacks within the street and should be setback in line with Mandelbaum House.	67
3. There should be an onsite manager 24 hours a day to ensure any issues are addressed promptly.	67
4. The setback should be increased to allow trees and vegetation to be established to screen the building and provide improved privacy and amenity.	65
5. The modern design and proposed amended façade does not reflect the heritage appearance of the Victorian terraces opposite on Abercrombie Street.	50
6. The proposed building is too bulky for the residential setting and its inappropriate height will dwarf buildings adjacent and opposite, impact the streetscape and be detrimental to the heritage character of the area. The building height should be reduced to 2 to 3 storeys to match Mandelbaum House.	30
7. The photomontages of the proposed amendments are misleading.	22
8. The proposed modifications would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents and will be detrimental to the suburb.	19.5
9. The pedestrianised areas adjacent to the eastern and western elevations should be kept as landscaped areas to discourage large gatherings of people, improve security, reduce potential light pollution at night and to provide visual screening of the building.	19.5
10. All trees within Abercrombie Street must be retained.	15
11. The student accommodation building does not appear to include best practice environmental design elements, such as solar panels, which the University should be a leader in and pursuing in this development.	13
12. The shadow diagrams demonstrate that residential dwellings, Mandelbaum House	6.5



and Darlington Public School will be overshadowed.	
13. The proponent's consultation has been inadequate and previously indicated that the student accommodation building's development would be undertaken at a later stage.	6.5
14. The building orientation should face north for practical reasons and temperature control and the three wings of the building separated and setback from Abercrombie Street.	2
15. The proposed modifications are not consistent with the original approval.	2

The department notes that a number of the matters raised were previously considered under the assessment of the original project application for the Abercrombie Precinct Redevelopment (MP07\_0158).

In this regard, the proposed amendments to the student accommodation building do not seek to increase the bulk, scale or height of the development, as originally approved.

Further, with respect to the numerous concerns raised regarding the amendments to the Abercrombie Street front setback, the department notes that no change to the approved setback is proposed.

#### 4.4 Response to Submissions

In response to the concerns raised during the exhibition period, the proponent submitted a Response to Submissions (RtS) report, which provided additional information and responded to the concerns raised. No amendments were proposed within the RtS. The department has considered the key issues identified in further detail in section 5 of this assessment report.

### 5. ASSESSMENT

The department considers the key issues for the proposed modification to be:

- built form and urban design;
- landscaping and public domain;
- environmental and residential amenity; and
- ecologically sustainable development.

#### 5.1 Built Form and Urban Design

The proponent seeks approval to modify the approved building to provide an improved façade and to better integrate the building with the existing residential terraces in Abercrombie Street. The proposal also seeks approval to modify the internal layout of the building due to the design implications associated with the removal of the Abercrombie Street basement entrance which is a requirement of condition B4 of the original project approval.

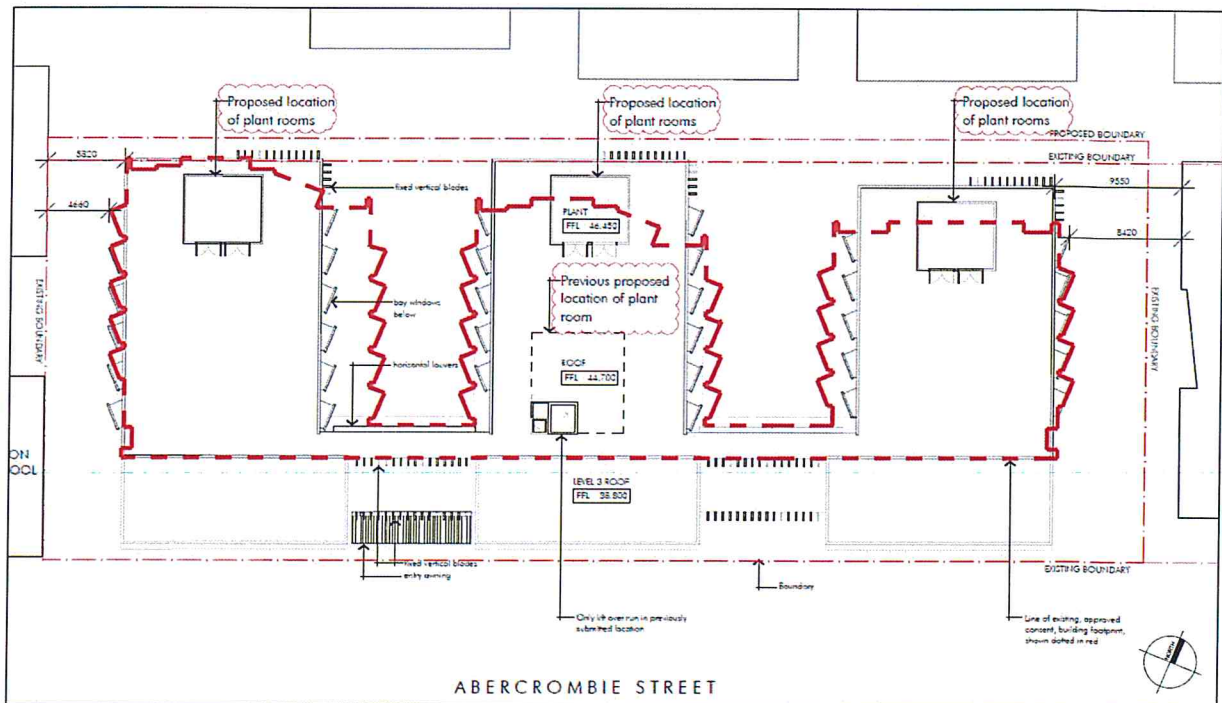
The height, bulk and scale of the approved building are not proposed to be amended (see **Figures 5 to 9**), with the building envelope remaining generally consistent with the original approval. Minor amendments to the footprint are proposed at the rear of the building, with the wings of the building proposed to be narrowed, and the central and eastern wings slightly extended towards the business school (see **Figure 10**). The proposed amendments allow for the relocation of the stair access and the relocated central location of the ground floor café.

Council advised that it supports the proposed 3.5 m floor to ceiling height of the ground floor, but also requested that a new condition be imposed requiring that a minimum 2.7 m floor to ceiling height is achieved for all habitable areas within the building. The department considers the imposition of this new condition is appropriate as it will ensure a reasonable level of amenity is achieved for future occupants.



The removal of the Abercrombie Street basement entrance has enabled the eastern edge of the ground floor to be extended east, which in conjunction with other internal layout amendments, makes provision for an additional 12 beds, increasing the total capacity of the college from 188 to 200 beds.

These amendments do not add additional height or bulk to the building. The department also notes that council is generally supportive of the proposed building footprint amendments, due to the increased separation between the building wings and increased communal areas is supported.



**Figure 10: Proposed Roof Plan (approved outline shown in red)**

The proposed amendments to the building façade seek to provide a complementary outlook to the existing residential terraces located opposite. The lower levels of the building are divided through the use of off-form concrete to provide greater vertical articulation in the façade. The proponent also noted that screens proposed along the front façade are to be designed with a contemporary Aboriginal pattern, providing a modern interpretation of the balustrade of the terraces opposite, that would also provide privacy and shading for students in the college.

Council noted that the proposed façade treatment provided a better representation of the form and proportion of the terraces opposite and no longer appeared institutional, which it supports. However, council commented that the proposed off-form concrete wall projections into the front setback should be provided within the original building footprint and not encroach any further towards Abercrombie Street. The department notes that the projections are only minor (400 mm) and provide a satisfactory façade response to the existing terraces opposite.

Council further noted that the lower front portions of the eastern and western elevations of the student accommodation building should be clad in a more suitable material, such as sandstone rather than the exposed concrete finish (labelled '6' on **Figures 8 and 9**). In response, the proponent advised that the use of the concrete panelling along these elevations was selected to provide a contemporary design response to the extensive use of sandstone materials on heritage buildings throughout the University's campus.



The department considers that the treatment of the lower portions of the western and eastern elevations provides a satisfactory design response to the setting, noting that the proponent proposes the use of sandstone within the design of the proposed front fencing for the college. It is also noted that these areas are adjacent to proposed pedestrian pathways, which will be landscaped on both sides (see **Figure 11**). This will assist in softening the contemporary concrete finish of these elements of the building.

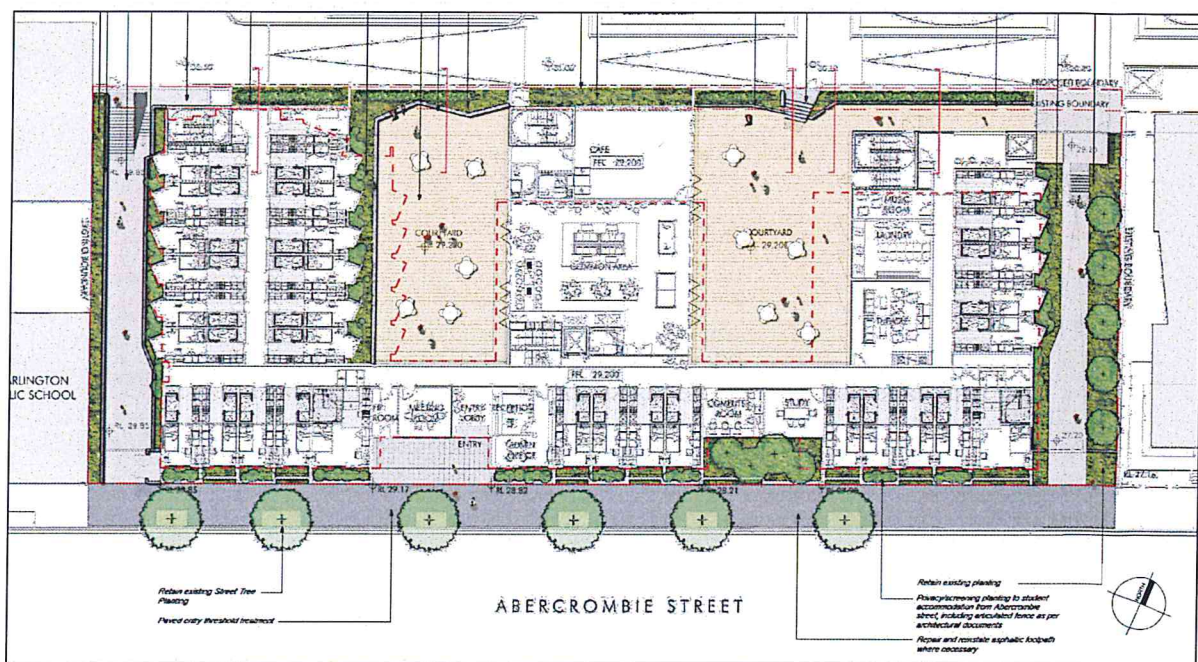
Having regard to the concerns raised within the public submissions regarding amended setbacks, it is noted that the proposal remains consistent with the existing approval and no changes are proposed in this regard. As demonstrated by **Figure 5**, the building setback along the Abercrombie Street frontage and western and eastern elevations is not proposed to be reduced. Further, the side setback from Mandelbaum House is more than adequate to ensure that existing residential amenity is maintained, being 5.8 m to the common boundary, and from 8.4 m to 9.3 m between built forms.

Whilst the approved front setback may not provide the same setback from Abercrombie Street as Mandelbaum House adjacent, the siting of the proposed college will provide a transition from the nil setback of Darlington Public School's Abercrombie Street frontage. The proposed setback will also provide a modern interpretation of the existing terraces opposite and their small porch setbacks and projected party walls.

With respect to concerns raised regarding the modern design of the development and its incompatibility with the heritage qualities of the surrounding neighbourhood, the department notes that the proponent's design provides a modern interpretation of the terraces opposite, which is considered acceptable and is satisfied that the proposed amendments are generally in keeping with the originally approved scheme and will not result in any additional adverse impacts.

## 5.2 Landscaping and Public Domain

The proponent seeks to amend the landscaping scheme for the student accommodation building in conjunction with the proposed building amendments (see **Figure 11**), including changes to accommodate the relocation of basement entrance access from Abercrombie Street.



**Figure 11: Proposed Landscape Plan**

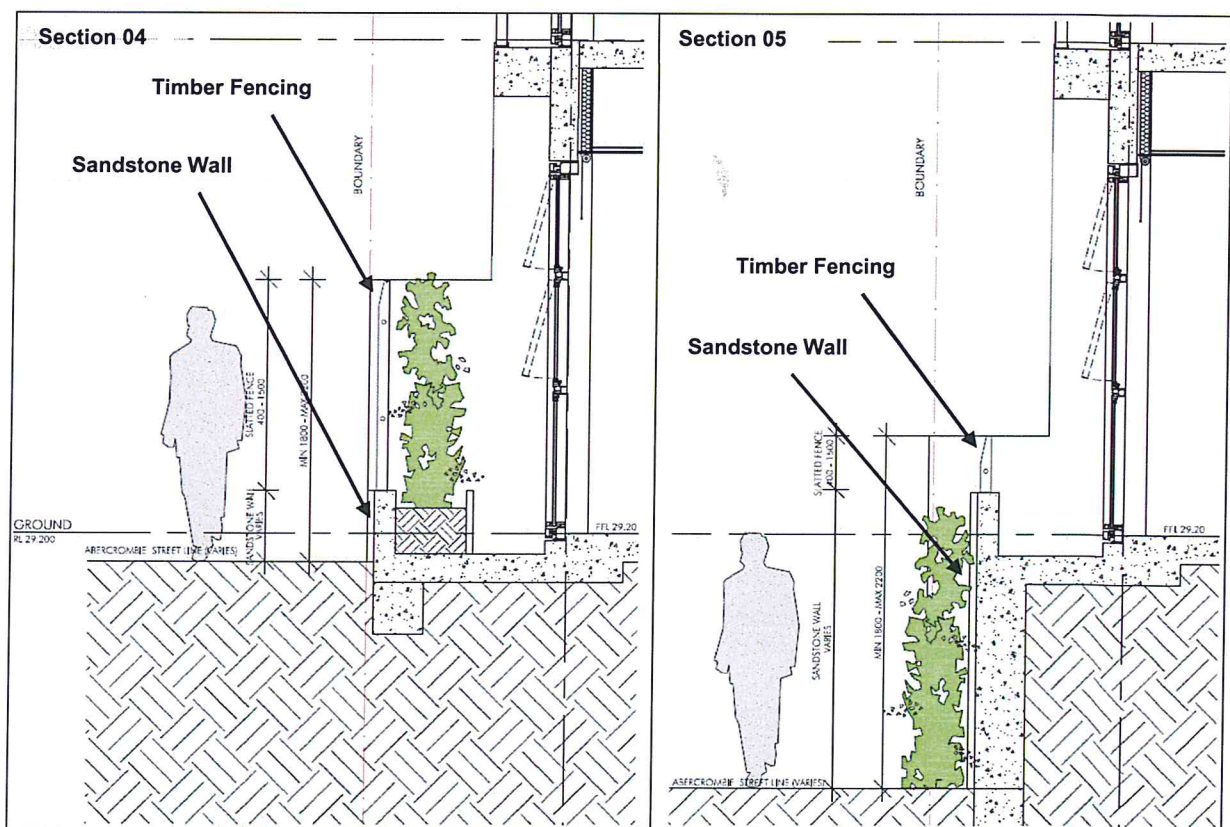


The proposed landscaping design details the existing Abercrombie Street vegetation and existing trees bordering the subject site and Mandelbaum House as being retained. The retention of the vegetation and removal of the basement entrance adjacent to Mandelbaum House will assist in retaining the existing amenity enjoyed by its occupants.

The proposed amended courtyard designs, in conjunction with the proposed relocation of the café from the eastern wing to the central wing, will provide a more active and usable space. The large courtyard areas are also provided with direct access from the centrally located common room, with a secondary rear pedestrian access gate provided to offer residents with direct access to and interaction with the University's campus. The proposed courtyard design amendments are considered satisfactory.

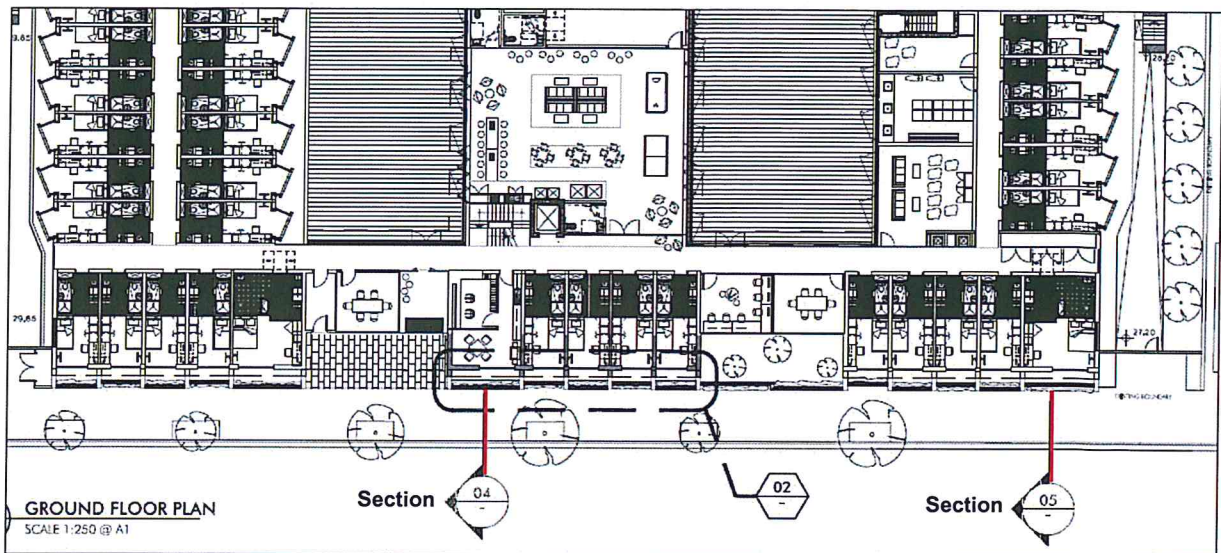
With respect to the security concerns raised by Mandelbaum House in relation to the establishment of a new pedestrian pathway adjacent to their site in place of the basement entrance, the proponent advises that outside of normal operating hours, both proposed pathways adjacent to the college will be security restricted, with no access provided to pedestrians or students. In this respect, the restricted access during these hours will provide a level of security similar to the current access arrangements between the Shepherd Centre and Mandelbaum House. Further, restriction of operating hours will also assist in reducing antisocial behaviour and the risk and ability for people to gather in these areas.

Proposed front fencing details indicate timber batten and sandstone wall fencing ranging in height between 1.8 m to 2.2 m. As detailed in Section 04 of **Figure 12**, the top level of the timber battens remains constant, while Section 05 details the height of the sandstone wall increasing to compensate for the site's approximate 1.8 m downward slope along the Abercrombie Street frontage (see **Figure 12** and **13**). Vegetation is also proposed with the timber batten fencing in an alternating pattern (see **Figure 14**) to break up the fencing line and add variety to the frontage.

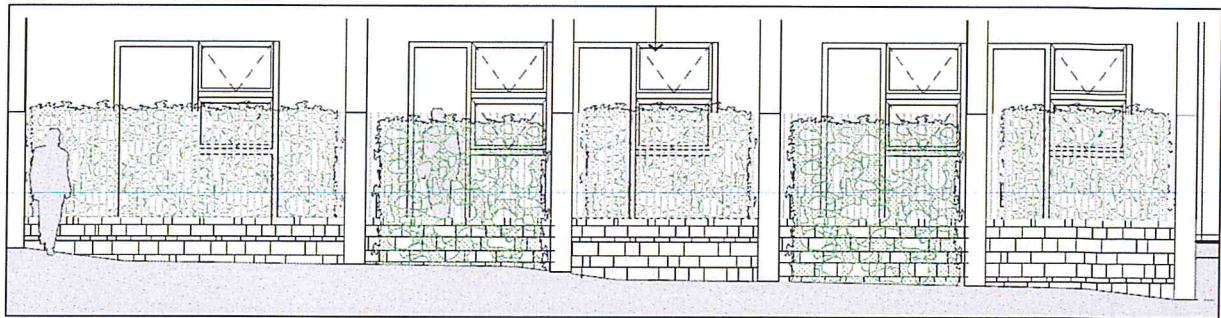


**Figure 12: Proposed Fencing – Section Details**





**Figure 13: Proposed Fencing – Plan Detail of Sections (as depicted in Figure 12)**



**Figure 14: Proposed Fencing – Landscaping Details**

While council advised that the timber batten and sandstone wall fencing arrangement provides an improved relationship to Abercrombie Street, it also noted that the relationship between the building, fencing, walls and landscaping created an inactive frontage and reduced passive surveillance opportunities. Concern was also raised with respect to the maintenance of the proposed vegetation integrated into the fencing due to limited access.

In response, the proponent notes that the fencing has been provided to create a residential character along the site's frontage, whilst still permitting visual permeability. The department considers the proposed fencing along the site's frontage to be satisfactory in providing security for the occupants of the development. It also offers a design response that reflects the non-institutional character of the local area. With respect to council's concerns regarding the lack of passive surveillance, the department notes that single bed studios are proposed predominantly along the ground floor, to which a level of vegetation and screening for privacy should ideally be provided. Notwithstanding, the permeable nature of the proposed fencing will ensure passive surveillance is possible when the rooms are occupied. Further, Levels 1 and 2 will also have single studios fronting Abercrombie Street, which will also provide casual surveillance to enhance the sense of safety and security.

The proponent also maintains that vegetation can be satisfactorily established within the proposed fencing planter beds and that once established, minimal maintenance is anticipated. However, the department considers that appropriate measures should be in place to ensure that the vegetation is satisfactorily established and maintained. Accordingly, the department recommends a new condition be imposed on the project approval, requiring the proponent to provide details to the satisfaction of the certifying authority demonstrating that landscaped areas for the college can be satisfactorily accessed to ensure their ongoing management and maintenance.



The department is satisfied that, subject to conditions, the proposed amended landscaping scheme complements the modified student accommodation building.

### **5.3 Environmental and Residential Amenity**

#### ***Building Capacity and Operation***

A number of concerns were raised in public submissions with respect to the proposed increase in student accommodation from 188 to 200 beds.

While the modifications would allow student accommodation to increase, the proposal would not have an impact on the overall height, bulk or scale of the development, with the amendments being largely contained within the existing building envelope. In addition, the removal of the basement entrance and amendments to the internal layout have enabled the removal of the five and six bed unit style/dorm rooms, to single bed studio style units which will be targeted for post-graduate students. The 12 bed increase in capacity is considered minor and it will have a negligible impact on the locality.

Further, the provision of additional beds within the development will provide much needed affordable housing for university students, which in turn will assist in alleviating the demand for rental housing within the locality. The department also notes that the increase in the capacity of the student accommodation building has not been opposed by council.

The proponent has advised that the management of the college will be the responsibility of the University, and subject to an open tender process to select the future operator. As part of this process, an operational plan will be required to be prepared detailing how the facility will be maintained and managed in accordance with the University's Well Being Program, which the successful operator will be required to report against to the University on a regular basis to ensure of the facility's satisfactory operation.

In this respect, the department is satisfied that the proposed increased capacity of the student accommodation building will not give rise to adverse amenity impacts, noting that the style of accommodation has been modified to attract post-graduate students and that the operation and management of the future facility will be subject to a contractual arrangement with the University that is subject to specific performance criteria.

#### ***Construction Management***

With respect to the concerns raised on behalf of Mandelbaum House regarding construction impacts, the department notes that these matters were addressed in detail during the department's assessment of the original project application. The proposed modifications will not increase the scale or duration of construction impacts.

The approved project included the imposition of appropriate conditions to manage and effectively mitigate construction related impacts. This included the construction of an acoustic fence (min. 2 m in height) adjacent to Darlington Public School, Mandelbaum House, the Boundary Lane Childcare Centre and the Shepherd Centre, and the implementation of an environmental construction management plan and a noise management plan.

Furthermore, the proponent has previously advised of the following measures and initiatives to assist in ameliorating noise and dust impacts that have already been implemented on site over and above conditional and environmental requirements:

- raised height and increased thickness of acoustic hoarding;
- installation of a misting system; and
- installation of air quality monitors for the remainder of civil works.



In addition, the department notes that the proponent has satisfactorily complied with all relevant conditions of approval, specifically:

- condition C1 (installation of an acoustic fence);
- condition C11 (preparation of a construction environmental management plan); and
- condition C12 (preparation and submission of a noise management plan for the department's approval).

While the department understands that this is a key issue for local residents, the department remains satisfied that the mitigation measures detailed within the management plans prepared by the proponent will ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to minimise any potential impacts on adjoining sensitive receivers.

In this respect, the department considers that appropriate measures are currently in place or proposed, to ensure that potential construction and operational noise and dust impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated and managed.

#### **5.4 Ecologically Sustainable Development**

Concerns were raised within public submissions regarding a perceived lack of environmentally sustainable development (ESD) design initiatives within the proposed amended building. The proponent responded by noting that the University of Sydney has a number of strategies in place to improve the built environment and campus liveability that would be applied to the building's operations where applicable, including:

- use of natural resources efficiently, including energy and water;
- reduction in carbon emissions through the use of renewable and alternative energy sources;
- enhancing more sustainable and healthier modes of public transport; and
- engaging with the various communities of the University to advance and promote sustainability initiatives.

The department notes the design of the building has had regard to a number of resource and energy efficient design practices, including the provision of north facing windows and units with a direct outlook to communal areas to maximise solar amenity for occupants and incorporation of water efficient fittings, rain water harvesting for landscape irrigation on site. Notwithstanding, the department considers that it is reasonable for the proponent to pursue the best ESD outcome for the development. Accordingly the department has recommended the imposition of an additional condition requiring the proponent to target a 5 star rating for the construction and operation of the college. The existing approval (as modified) only contains an ESD condition relating to the business school, and not the residential college.

The department is satisfied that suitable ecologically sustainable outcomes will be achieved for the development and ensure that the new college contributes to the University's role in improving built environment outcomes across the campus.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The modification application seeks approval to amend the approved student accommodation building component of the Abercrombie Precinct Redevelopment, to improve its relationship with the surrounding built environment and amend the internal layout of the building following the required removal of the Abercrombie Street basement entrance.

The department has reviewed the proponent's modification request, accompanying plans and response to submissions report and considers the key issues to be built form and urban design, landscape and public domain, environmental and residential amenity and ecologically sustainable development.



In assessing the key issues, the department considers that the proposed modifications will improve the façade design and the development's response to the existing residential terraces opposite, and that the bulk and scale of the development remains consistent with the approved project, thereby minimising any potential adverse amenity impacts.

In view of the above, the department considers that the proposed amendments to be acceptable.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

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The department's recommends that the PAC:

- a) **consider** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- b) **approve** the modifications, subject to conditions, under section 75W of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*, and;
- c) **sign** the attached instrument of modification approval (Appendix C).

  
Director  
Industry, Social Projects & Key Sites

18/2/14

24.2.14

Executive Director  
Development Assessment Systems and Approvals