



***MODIFICATION REQUEST:  
Sydney University Abercrombie  
Precinct Redevelopment  
Cnr Codrington Street and Abercrombie  
Street  
(MP07\_0158 MOD 5)***

**Modifications to the Student Accommodation  
Building component of the development,  
including:**

- installation of photovoltaic cells and solar hot water heating cells on the building roof
- consolidation of rooftop plant enclosures into a single, centrally located enclosure
- modification to the pattern design of the southern façade privacy screens

Secretary's Environmental Assessment Report  
Section 75W of the *Environmental Planning and  
Assessment Act 1979*

October 2014

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## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Introduction

The University of Sydney (the proponent) has lodged a modification application (MP07\_0158 MOD 5) proposing amendments to the Student Accommodation Building component of the approved Abercrombie Precinct Redevelopment. The modification application proposes to amend the building's rooftop to allow for the installation of photovoltaic (PV) cells and solar hot water panels (SPs) and the consolidation of three existing rooftop plant enclosures into a single enclosure. The modification application also seeks approval to amend the pattern of the front façade privacy screens.

### 1.2 Site Context

The Abercrombie Precinct Redevelopment 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 surrounded by a number of land uses, including two storey residential terraces on Darlington Road (predominantly owned by the University and used for student accommodation), University buildings adjacent to the north-east and east, Darlington Public School adjacent to the west, and existing two to three storey terraces and three storey Royal Hotel located opposite the site on Abercrombie Street. The location of the site is detailed in **Figure 1**.

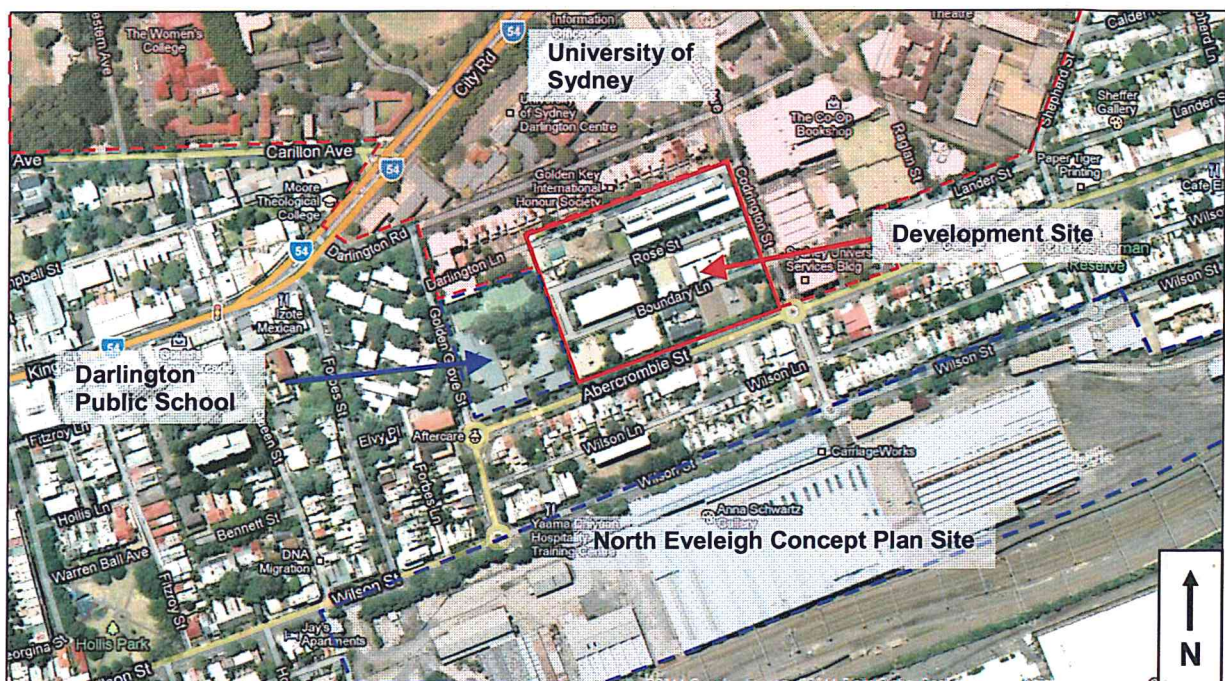


Figure 1: Site Location

The subject Student Accommodation Building fronts Abercrombie Street and is bound by the Business School Building development to the north, Mandelbaum House to the east and Darlington Public School to the west. Construction works associated with the Business School Building and Student Accommodation Building have substantially commenced (see **Figure 2**).

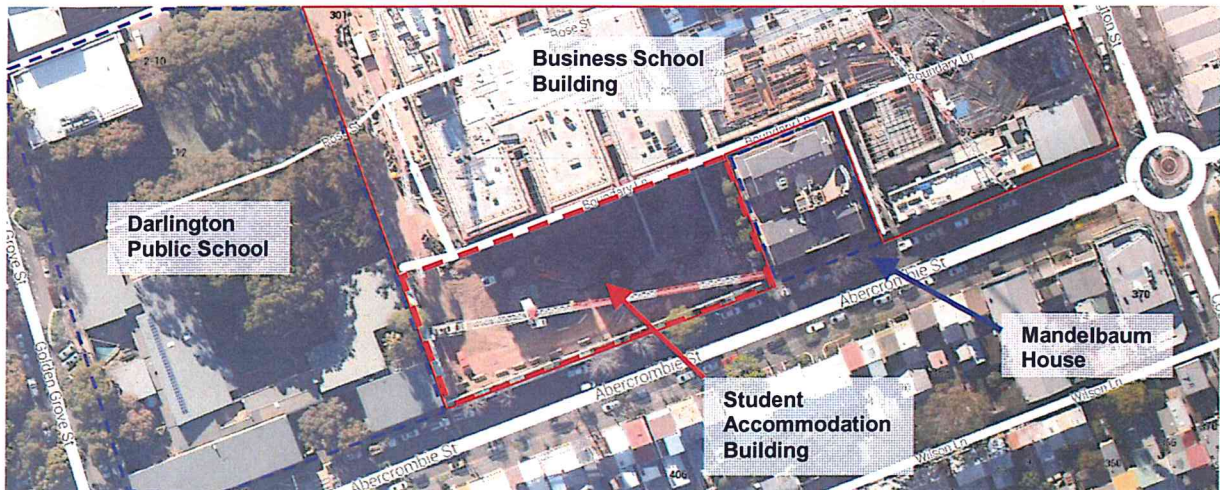


Figure 2: Student Accommodation Building Site Location

### 1.3 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.

On 21 June 2013, the then Director, Metropolitan and Regional Projects North approved a modification application (MP07\_0158 MOD 1), lodged 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.

On 14 February 2014, the PAC approved a modification application (MP07\_0158 MOD 2), lodged by the University of Sydney, for design amendments to the approved business school building.

On 31 March 2014, the PAC approved a modification application (MP07\_0158 MOD 3), lodged by the University of Sydney, for design amendments to the approved student accommodation building.

On 7 April 2014, the University of Sydney (the proponent) lodged a modification application (MP07\_0158 MOD 4) seeking approval to modify condition D11 Hours of Work to allow extended construction hours from 6 pm to 12 am Mondays to Fridays, and from 3 pm to 10 pm Saturdays, for internal building works only. The modification application is currently under assessment by the Department.

Construction works on site have been substantially commenced.

## 2. PROPOSED MODIFICATION

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The proponent seeks approval to modify the student accommodation building as follows:

- installation of photovoltaic (PV) cells and solar hot water panels (SPs) on the roof;
- consolidation of the three rooftop plant enclosures into one plant enclosure, located on the roof at the rear of the building's middle wing; and
- modification to the pattern design of the front façade privacy screens.

The proposed installation of PV cells and SPs on the student accommodation building is sought by the proponent as part of its commitment to its own environmental sustainability framework. The proposed consolidation of the rooftop plant enclosures is a result of design evolution and has created additional rooftop space to allow for the installation of the proposed PV cells and SPs.

Changes to the pattern design of the front façade privacy screens has resulted from a desire by the University to use a design sourced from a local artist.

## 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 seeks approval to amend elements 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 Secretary with scope to issue Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) 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

Under the Instrument of Delegation dated 14 September 2011, the Minister for Planning's powers and functions under section 75W of the EP&A Act have been delegated to the Secretary, where:

- the relevant local council has not made an objection;
- a political disclosure statement has not been made; and
- there are less than 10 public submissions in the nature of objection.

Council has not objected, a political disclosure statement has not been made in relation of the proposed modification application and no public submissions have been received. Accordingly, the Secretary may determine the modification under delegated authority.

## 4. CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSIONS

The application was made publically available on the Department's website in accordance with the requirements of the EP&A Act and was referred to the City of Sydney (Council) for comment. Due to the minor nature of the proposed amendments, the application was not exhibited. No public submissions have been received.

Council raised no objections to the proposed amendments, providing the following comments:

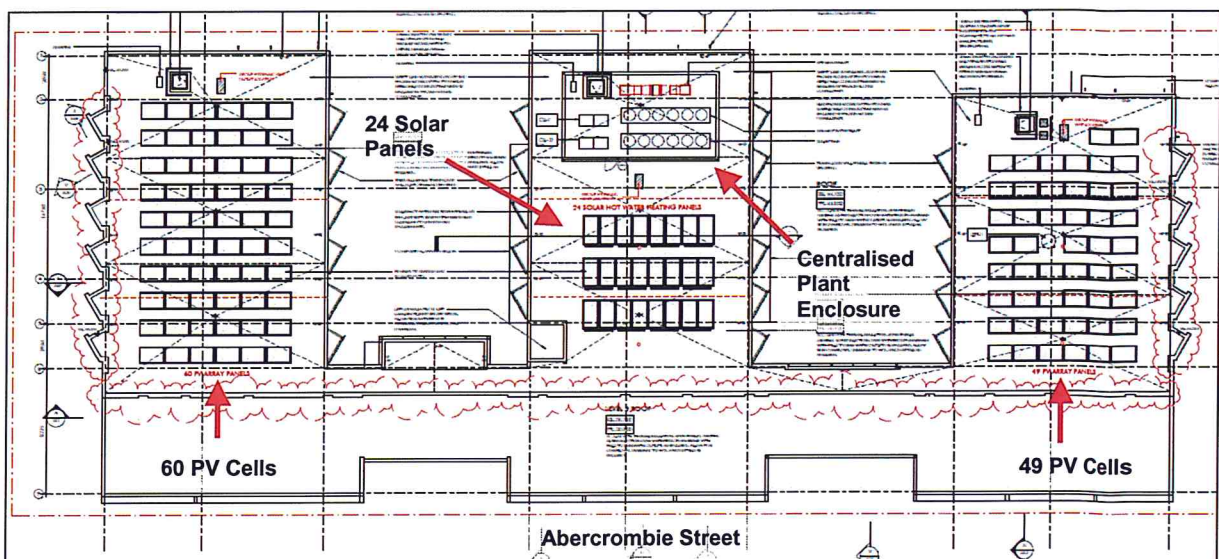
- Council supports the inclusion of photovoltaic panels and solar hot water panels, noting that the building's parapet, the setback of the panels and their mounting height will ensure they are not readily visible from surrounding areas;
- the consolidation of the plant towards the northern end of the central rooftop is a distinct improvement and is supported; and
- the modified screen design is less vibrant/striking, however no significant objection is raised to the design change.

## 5. ASSESSMENT

The key issues associated with the application include built form and the appearance of the building within the existing streetscape.

The proponent proposes to install PV cells and SPs on the rooftop of the student accommodation building to improve the energy efficiency of the building's future operations and to also meet the University's commitment to its own environmental sustainability framework. In total, the proponent is seeking approval for the installation of up to 109 PV cells and 24 SPs (see **Figure 3**).

To ensure sufficient roof space is available, the proponent also seeks to rationalise the rooftop plant and consolidate the three approved plant enclosures into a single enclosure, located at the rear of the middle wing of the building (see **Figure 3**).



**Figure 3: Proposed Roof Level**

Council raised no objections to the proposed modifications at the roof level, noting that the PV cells and SPs would not be readily visible from the surrounding area. It also advised that the consolidation of the plant into a single enclosure was a distinct improvement and was supported.

The Department agrees that the visibility of the new rooftop elements of the development will be limited. This is due to the height of the parapet wall as well as the setback and location the new plant enclosure and PV cells/SPs.

Further, the proposed consolidation of the existing rooftop plant into a single plant enclosure, and its location at the rear of the middle wing on the student accommodation building, will improve the appearance of the building within Abercrombie Street and the immediate locality (see **Figures 4 and 5**).

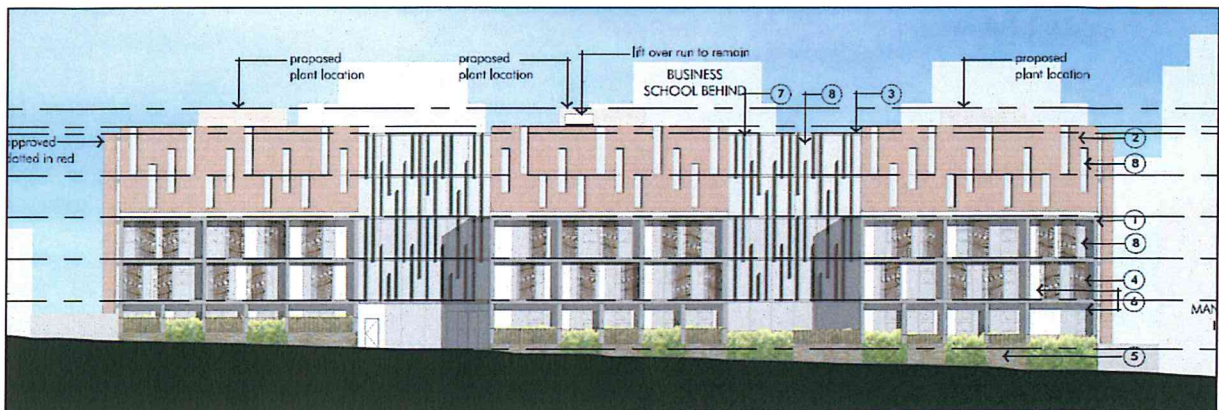


Figure 4: Approved South Elevation (Abercrombie Street)

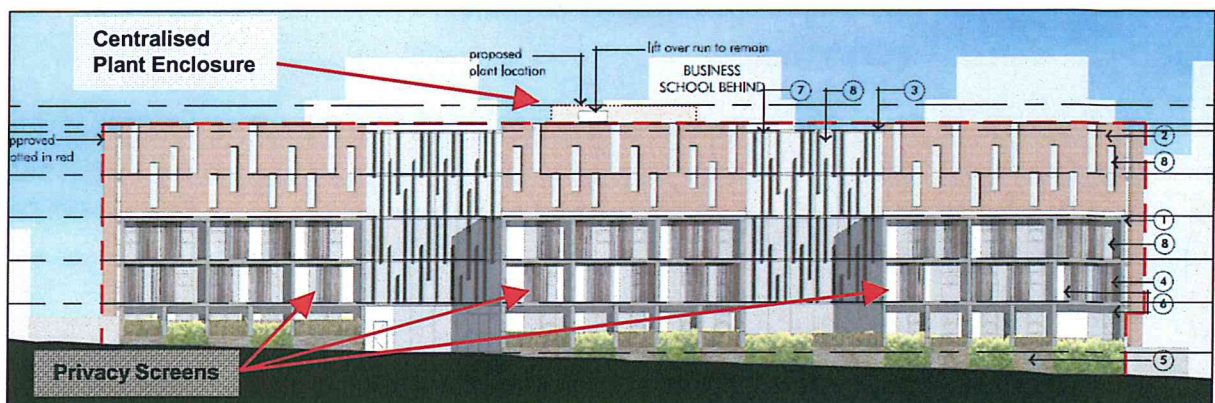


Figure 5: Proposed South Elevation

The Department is satisfied that the proposed amendments to the rooftop of the student accommodation building will contribute positively to the building's operational efficiency and appearance within the Abercrombie Street streetscape.

The proponent's application also seeks to amend the pattern design of the front façade privacy screens, as detailed in **Figures 6 and 7**. The proponent advises that design change is desired to make use of a pattern designed by a local artist.

Council advised that while they preferred the approved pattern design, no objections were raised to the amended pattern design.

The Department has concluded that the proposed change to the pattern design is minor and will not adversely impact on the appearance of the approved student accommodation building. The amended screen design will still provide privacy and shading for residents, and also retain the contemporary design characteristics previously approved. The Department also notes that the material, colour and finish of the screens are not proposed to change, which further assists in minimising potential impacts.

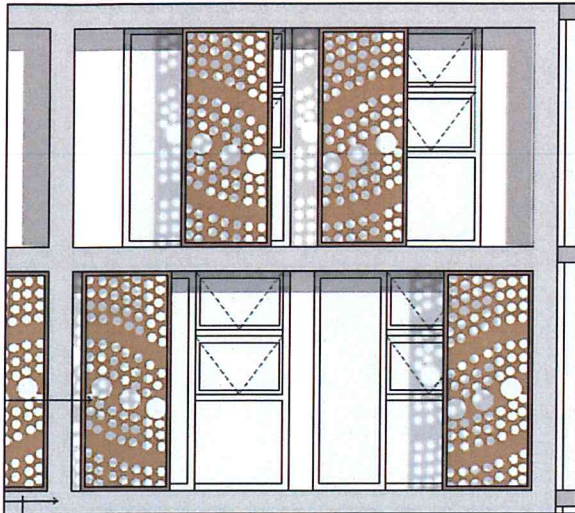


Figure 6: Approved Privacy Screen Design

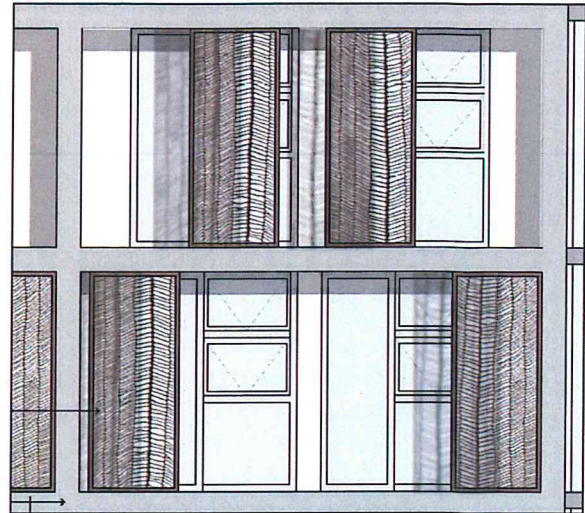


Figure 7: Proposed Privacy Screen Design

## 6. CONCLUSION

The modification application seeks approval for modifications to the Student Accommodation Building rooftop, including the proposed installation of PV cells and SPs on the rooftop and consolidation of the three existing rooftop plant enclosures into a single enclosure, located at the rear of the middle wing of the building. The application also seeks approval for a change to the pattern of the front façade privacy screens, while retaining the approved material, colour and finish.

No concerns were raised by Council regarding the proposed amendments, specifically commenting that the consolidation of the plant enclosure to a single enclosure would provide a distinct improvement to the building. The Department raises no objections to the proposed minor amendments, which will provide a rationalised rooftop plant arrangement, improved building sustainability functionality and maintenance of the building contemporary design characteristics and finish.

In view of the above, the Department's assessment concludes that the proposed modifications are acceptable.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

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It is recommend that the Secretary:

- 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) **signs** the attached instrument of modification approval (**Tag A**).

Prepared by:



14/10/14

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Key Sites

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Key Sites



20.10.14

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## **APPENDIX A    MODIFICATION REQUEST**

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See the Department's website at:

[http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view\\_job&job\\_id=6586](http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6586)

## **APPENDIX B SUBMISSIONS**

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## **APPENDIX D    RECOMMENDED MODIFYING INSTRUMENT**

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