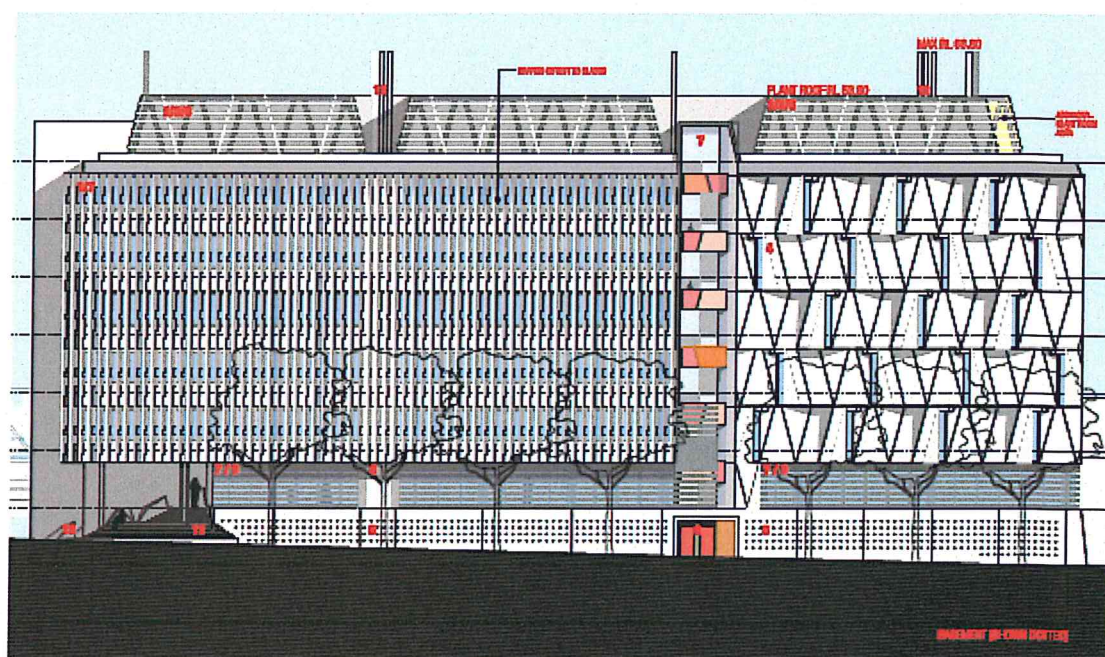




Planning &
Infrastructure

**MODIFICATION REQUEST:
Children's Medical Research Institute
(MP08_0159 MOD 1)**



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

October 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an assessment of a Modification Application (MOD 1) by Children's Medical Research Institute in Westmead (CMRI) (the proponent) requesting modifications to Project Approval MP08_0159, to allow the construction of an additional floor to the approved CMRI building, which will replicate the floor plans of approved levels 3 and 4 and raise the height of the approved building by 3.9 m. The approved basement level is also proposed to be lowered by 700 mm to allow for an increased floor to ceiling height to match the height of the other scientific floors. An additional 200 sqm of floor area is also proposed to be incorporated into the basement to accommodate additional vibration sensitive research equipment.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed modification was made publicly available on the department's website, and consultation was undertaken with adjoining landowners and Parramatta City Council.

The department has assessed the merits of the proposed modification and is satisfied that any resultant environmental impacts can be adequately mitigated and managed.

The department considers that the proposed modification application should be approved subject to the imposition of amended conditions.

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Site

The Children's Medical Research Institute is located at 214 Hawkesbury Road Westmead (Lot 1 in DP 847561) and is located within the local government area of Parramatta. The institute is situated within the Westmead Hospital Precinct and is owned by the Health Commission of New South Wales, with the site currently being leased to the Children's Medical Research Institute (CMRI) Foundation until 2042 with a further 50 year option. The site has an area of 4772 sqm with a frontage of 74.27 m to Hawkesbury Road. The site fronts onto Hawkesbury Road and is also accessible via the adjoining hospital serviceway.

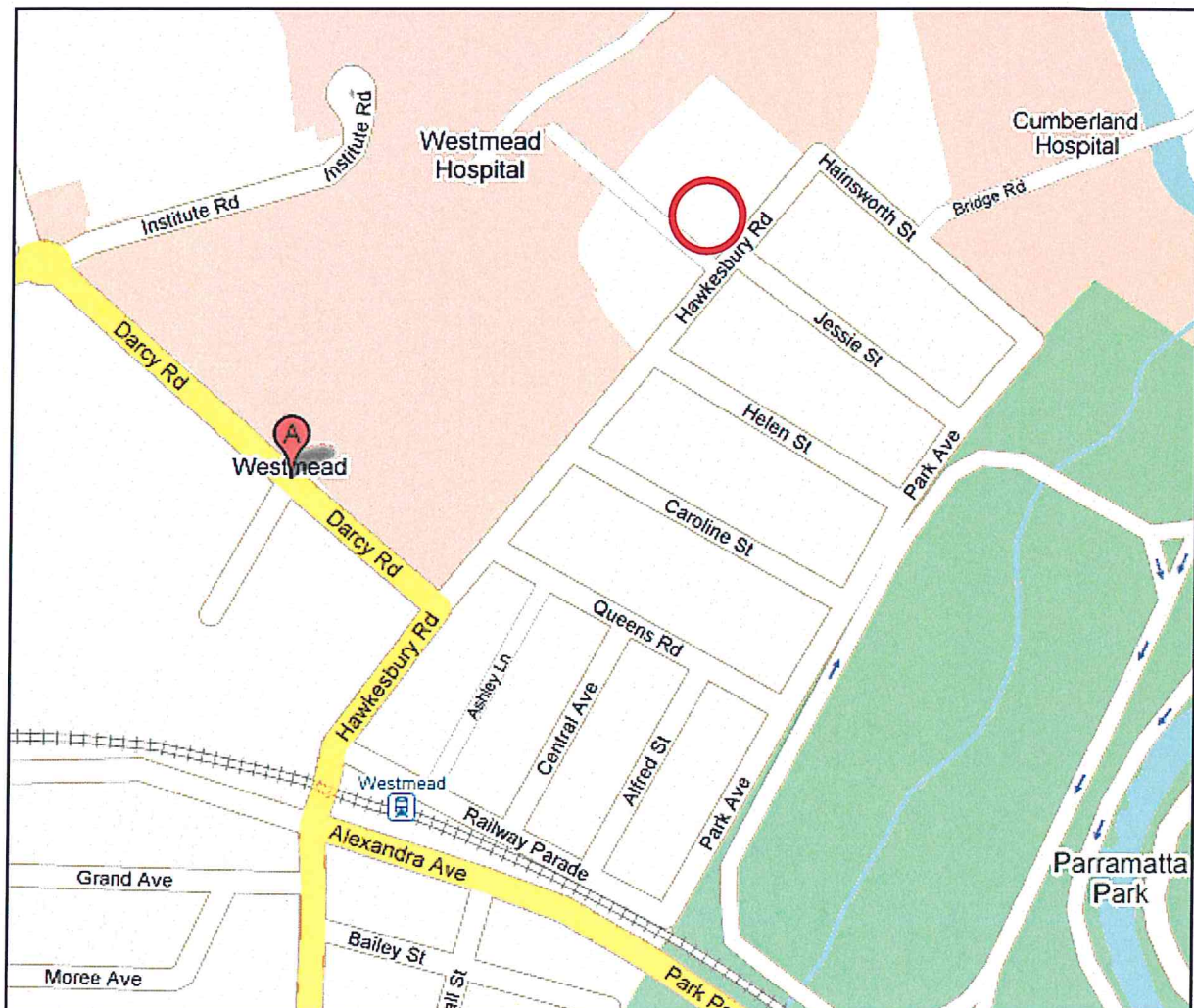


Figure 1: Site Location (red circle provides indicative location of the site)

The existing CMRI building was built in 1992 and was designed by Ancher Mortlock Woolley Architects, who have also designed the proposed new building. The existing building provides two levels of research, administrative, seminar and building support areas. The CMRI is a not-for profit charity organisation that has operated for over 50 years providing medical research in the areas of paediatric health, cancer research, neurochemistry, developmental biology diseases and genetic medicine. CMRI works together with hospitals and the University of Sydney in the areas of research and teaching medical students. Currently CMRI employees 160 staff.

Westmead is located within the western suburbs of Sydney, approximately 26 km from the Sydney CBD and 1.5 km north-west of the Parramatta CBD. It is well serviced by a rail and bus, including the Transit way and the Westmead train station which is located 500 m south of the subject site. Hawkesbury Road provides the main access to the Hospital precinct and also contains numerous commercial uses such as a small village centre and shops.

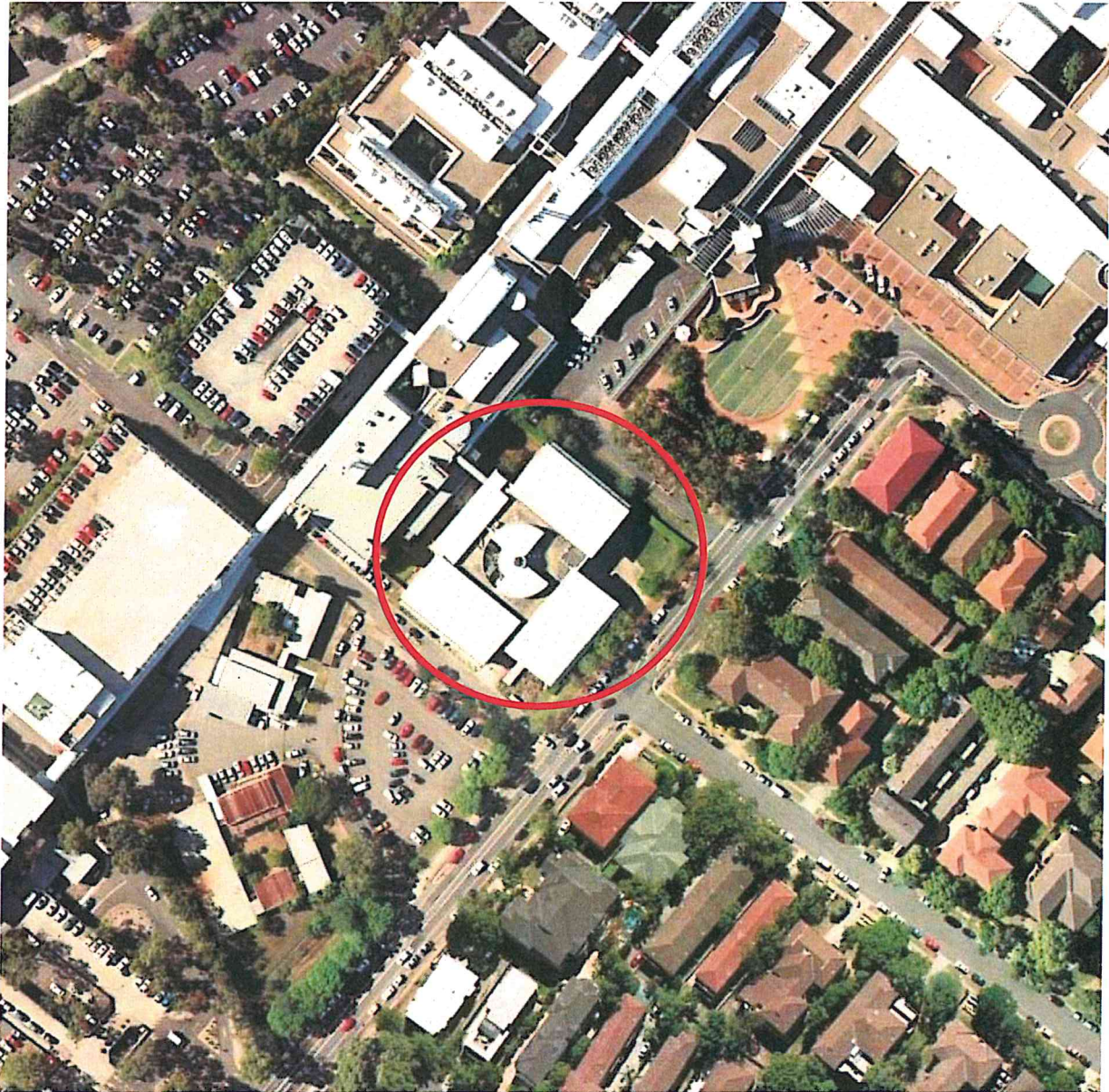


Figure 2: Aerial Photo of the research institute (red circle) and surrounding development

1.2 Approval History

On 31 August 2009, the then Minister for Planning approved a project application (MP08_0159) for the staged construction of a six storey medical research building including car parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure on the subject site.

The project has been designed to allow for the uninterrupted continuation of the facility during the staged construction of the new building. The intention of the staging is to minimise disruption to research activities and to allow for staged funding. Staged construction will be achieved through using a decanting-construction methodology

commencing with the north, east and south elevations and culminating with the central atrium/staff recreation space in the centre of the site. Due to CMRI's status as a non-profit charity organisation, funding is a key issue and therefore construction staging will be dependent upon the level of funding available. Construction of Stage 1 to 5 is expected to be finalised within 10 to 15 years from commencement of works.

The staging of the project is illustrated below.

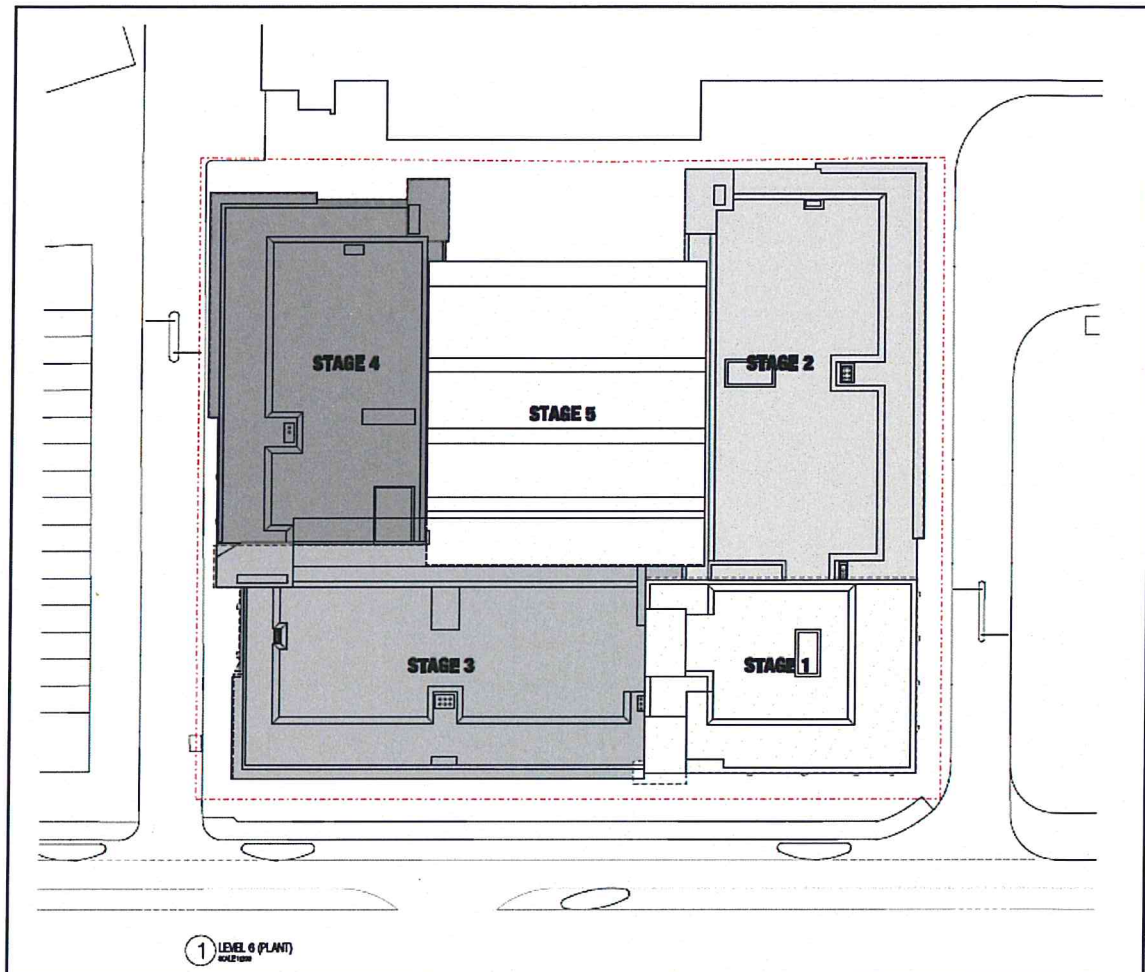


Figure 3: Staging Plan

It is expected that as each stage of the project is constructed there will be an increase in the number of staff. By the completion of Stage 5 the anticipated total number of staff is 540 people. This includes researchers and administration staff.

Stage 1

- Construction of a six storey building in current forecourt area, to be occupied by new staff from the northern wing.
- Establishment of temporary entry from Hawkesbury Road.

Stage 2

- The demolition of the northern wing and the construction of a five storey block, including conference rooms, in its place.
- Completion of dedicated indoor and secure bicycle parking in close proximity to staff facilities.

Stages 1 and 2 will take three to four years to complete and be able to accommodate 160 new researchers plus support staff bringing the total number of staff to 320. During this period of time Children's Hospital Westmead will simultaneously construct a new staff car park which will provide 100 dedicated parking spaces for CMRI staff.

Stage 3

- The demolition and construction of southern wing fronting Hawkesbury Road.
- Completion of new entry from Hawkesbury Road.
- Relocation of staff within buildings will provide space for an additional 160 researchers plus support staff.

Stage 4

- Relocation of staff and animal house.
- Demolition of existing animal house and completion of southern wing.
- Completion of conference and associated facilities.
- On-site parking (basement) providing 23 car spaces.
- Completion of Stage 4 will allow total staff numbers to increase to approximately 540.

Stage 5

- Decommissioning of plant and services in central core.
- Construction of atrium courtyard and associated staff amenities (no further increase in staff numbers).

1.3 Justification for Modification

Since the original approval in 2009, CMRI have identified a need for additional floor space to allow the full potential of the research facility to be realised. The overall long term aim is to increase the dedicated research and support space in the new facility to allow the institute to reach a "Critical Research Mass". World class research organisations require critical mass to be competitive in attracting high calibre researchers, research students and competitive grant funding, and to generate the highest quality research.

The proponent is proposing to achieving this increase in floor space is by including an additional floor between existing levels 4 and 5 to make a new level 5.

2. PROPOSED MODIFICATION

2.1 Modification Description

Approval is sought for the construction of an additional floor to the approved CMRI building, which will replicate the floor plans of approved levels 3 and 4 (3090 sqm) and effectively raise the height of the approved building by 3.9 m. The approved basement level is also proposed to be lowered by 700 mm to allow for an increased floor to ceiling height to match the height of the other scientific floors. An additional 200 sqm of floor area is also proposed to be incorporated into the basement to accommodate additional vibration sensitive research equipment.

An elevation of the proposed modified building form is shown in Figure 4 below. A summary of the key parameters of the approved development and the proposed modification is shown in table 1 below.

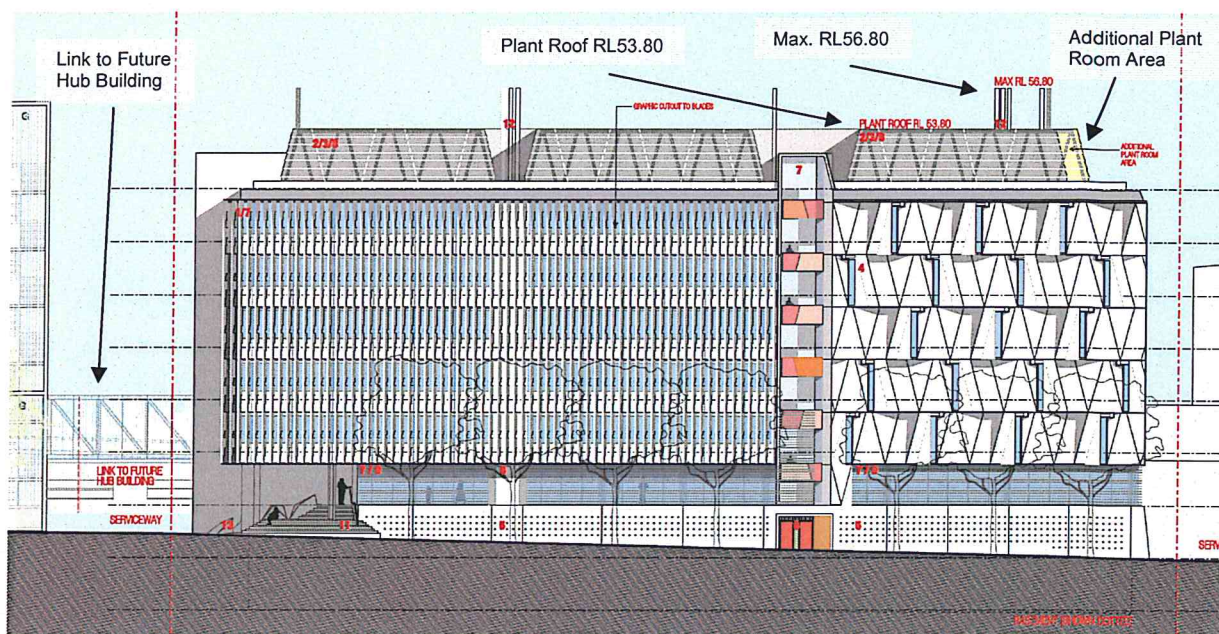


Figure 4: Hawkesbury Road elevation of the CMRI building (as proposed)

COMPONENT	APPROVED	PROPOSED (MOD 1)
Height (RL) (nb. ground RL 22)	49.9 (plant roof) (= 27.9 m)	53.8 (plant roof) (= 31.8 m)
Number of Storeys	6 storeys (plus plant)	7 storeys (plus plant)
GFA	19,260 sqm	22,550 sqm
FSR	4.04:1	4.72:1
Car Parking (basement)	23 spaces	23 spaces
Employees	540	640

Table 1: Development data

No changes to parking or landscaping are proposed for the CMRI development.

The modification requires an amendment to conditions A1 and A2 of the CMRI Project Approval (MP08_0159) in relation to the development description and plans and documentation and condition B5 in relation to car parking.

3. STATUTORY CONTEXT

3.1 Modification of the Minister's Approval

On 1 October 2011, Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act) was repealed. Despite this, Part 3A continues to apply to certain projects subject to the transitional provisions identified in Schedule 6A of the Act.

Approved projects are considered to be "transitional Part 3A projects" within the Act, and Part 3A of the Act (as in force immediately before the repeal of Part 3A and as modified in Schedule 6A of the Act after the repeal) continues to apply to and in respect of a transitional Part 3A projects. The ability to modify transitional Part 3A projects under s75W therefore remains in force.

Section 75W(2) of the 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 proposed modification seeks to amend conditions A1, A2 and B5, the modification will require the Minister's approval.

3.2 Delegated Authority

On 1 October 2011, the Minister delegated his powers and functions under Section 75W of the EP&A Act to Directors in the Major Projects Assessment Division in cases where:

- (a) the relevant local council has not made an objection, and
- (b) a political disclosure statement has not been made, and
- (c) there are less than 10 public submissions in the nature of objections.

Parramatta City Council has not objected to the proposed modification, a political disclosure statement has not been made in relation to the proposed modification application and no public submissions have been received. The A/Director Metropolitan and Regional Projects North can therefore determine the modification under delegated authority.

4. CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSIONS

Under section 75X(2)(f) of the EP&A Act, the Director-General is required to make the modification request publically available. The department made the modification request publically available on the department's website and notified Parramatta City Council and adjoining landowners in writing.

No submissions were received from the public. The department received a submission from Parramatta City Council. Whilst raising no objection to the proposed modifications, council provided the following comments:

- council understands that the existing parking agreement between the CMRI and Westmead Children's Hospital will be revised to accommodate the additional parking demand generated by the proposed modification
- council requests that the original conditions that relate to the proponent's obligations to provide car parking as part of the development and the carrying out of certain physical works to council-owned infrastructure remain
- council requests that the Workplace Travel Plan (condition D4) and the provision of car parking on site (condition B5) should reflect the changes proposed in the modification
- council reiterates their desire (as expressed in their submission on the original application) for the preparation of a Masterplan for the entire Westmead Health Precinct to ensure that future expansion within the precinct is carried out in an orderly and rational manner.

Council's comments have been considered and incorporated, where relevant, in the amended conditions of approval. The request for a Masterplan for the entire health campus is beyond the scope of the CMRI approval.

5. ASSESSMENT

The key issues for the proposed modifications are outlined and addressed below.

Height, Bulk and Scale

The height of the CMRI building will increase by approximately 3.9 m, from 27.9 m to 31.8 m (RL 53.8) to the top of the roof plant, as a consequence of the proposed modifications. Also, the GFA of the development will increase by 3,290 sqm (total 22,550 sqm), resulting in an increase in FSR from 4.04:1 to 4.72:1.

Since the original approval the site adjacent to the CMRI has received project approval (MP10_0050) for the construction of the Westmead Millennium Institute (WMI) and Westmead Research Hub (WRH). This development consists of an eight storey medical research building with a gross floor area of 12,921 sqm. The building will achieve a maximum height of 36 m (RL 56).

There are currently no Parramatta City Council LEP or DCP building height or FSR controls that apply to this site.

Figure 5 below shows the relationship of the approved CMRI and WMI buildings as they present to Hawkesbury Road.

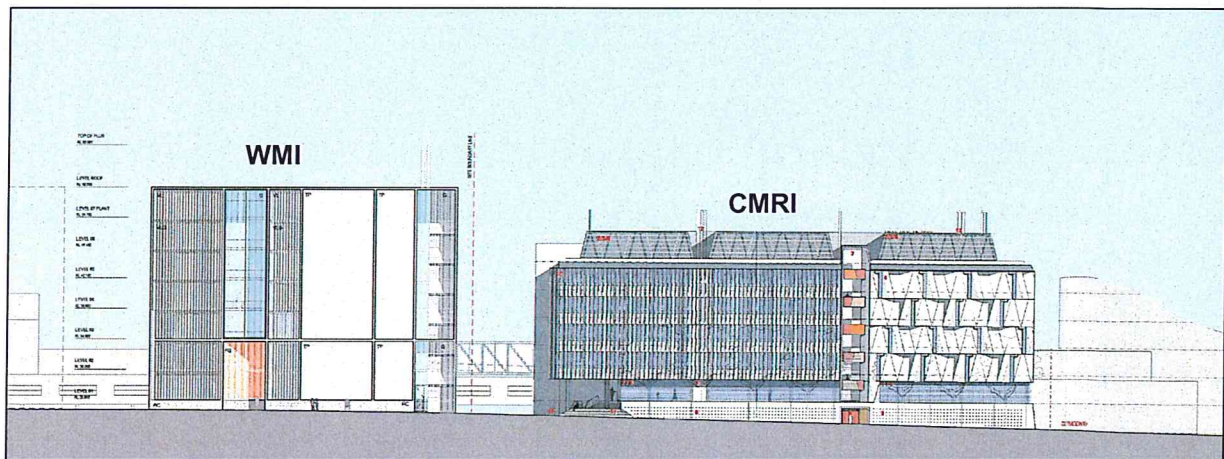


Figure 5: Hawkesbury Road elevation of WMI and CMRI buildings (as approved)

As can be seen in Figure 5, the height of the approved CMRI building is significantly lower than the WMI building, and as a consequence of the proposed modifications the CMRI will still be 2.2 m lower than the adjoining WMI building at the plant roof level (see Figure 4).

Building heights of adjacent hospital related development varies from one storey buildings, up to larger four and five storey buildings, including the adjoining Newborn and Paediatric Emergency Transport Service (NETS) building. Surrounding residential development comprises predominantly of three to four storey residential apartment buildings, with the exception of 181 Hawkesbury Road, a nine storey residential apartment building located to the south of the subject site.

Under Council's current planning controls, the residential precinct adjacent to the east and bounded by Hawkesbury Road and Parramatta Park is zoned Residential 2(d). The zone currently permits high density residential development up to six

storeys in height, one storey below that of the CMRI's proposed height and WMI's approved height fronting Hawkesbury Road.

Further, studies undertaken by NSW Health, including master planning exercises and a discussion paper titled, *Westmead Health Campus Future Direction Paper*, identify Hawkesbury Road as a key expansion zone, with heights varying between four and nine storeys explored and considered acceptable.

In this respect, the department considers the proposed height of the modified CMRI building to be acceptable within the context of existing surrounding development and consistent with the vision of future medical & health related and residential development.

Further, the proposed increase in GFA and height will not significantly alter the bulk and scale of the approved building, noting that 200 sqm of the GFA increase will occur in the building's basement. The proposal remains consistent with the bulk and scale of surrounding development and has included adequate urban design treatments to provide visual interest to the building.

In terms of overshadowing impacts, the proposal generates minimal additional overshadowing of adjoining properties with all residential receivers along the eastern side of Hawkesbury Road retaining a minimum of 3 hours of sunlight access during the winter solstice and equinox.

Parking and Traffic

The proposed modification will increase the number of CMRI staff by approximately 100. Previous studies (provided with the original project application) indicate that through demand management, the number of people travelling by car to work can be reduced to approximately 42%. The modification will not change any of the strategies adopted in the approved project, however with a 42% car driver mode share, parking for an additional 42 cars for the increase in staff will need to be provided as a consequence of the modification.

As identified in the original application, there is limited scope to provide car spaces on site in the basement of the CMRI building. While the basement can accommodate 14 car spaces, including one disabled space, and another 6 in an adjoining lane, the remaining car parking spaces required by the CMRI are intended to be located off site within the new Children's Hospital Westmead (CHW) multi-storey car park in a similar way to that proposed in the approved project application. A commitment already exists in association with the original project approval to provide 100 CMRI spaces in the CHW car park, which is expected to be constructed by the time Stage 2 of the CMRI is completed. Discussions are continuing between the CMRI and the Children's Hospital to ensure that all the required car spaces are available at the relevant stage of the CMRI development. Condition B5 of the original approval is also recommended to be modified to ensure that 142 staff parking spaces are provided for the CMRI within the future CHW car park.

A supplementary traffic report provided with the modification application concludes that peak hour traffic generation associated with the increase in staff numbers will be only 21 vehicles and the maximum impact of these vehicles will be on Hawkesbury Road/Darcy Road intersection, which currently operates at Level of Service (LOS) B.

These additional vehicles are not considered to significantly impact on this Level of Service.

The proposed additional staff at CMRI is also expected increase the effectiveness of the transport demand management program. Many of the identified initiatives, for example ridesharing, benefit from increased numbers of staff. In addition, the approval of the adjacent WMI development provides the opportunity for shared initiatives which would have the potential to increase the effectiveness of travel plans of both buildings.

6. CONCLUSION

The department has considered the requested modifications to Project Approval MP08_0159 and considered the key issues associated with these modifications. The proposed modifications are considered to be minor and will not result in a significant change to the approved development.

It is therefore recommended that the modifications be approved subject to amended conditions.

7. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Director, Metropolitan and Regional Projects North:

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

Prepared by:



David Gibson
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Metropolitan and Regional Projects North