

12 February 2010

Mr Daniel Keary,
Director Government Land and Social Projects Assessments,
NSW Department of Planning,
23-33 Bridge Street,
Sydney NSW 2000

Att: Megan Webb

Dear Megan,

MP 08_0172 – Royal North Shore Hospital - Section 75W Application – Community Health Facility.

We refer to your letter of 11 January 2010 and on behalf of Infrashore thank you for the input of both Willoughby City Council and the Department with respect to the further detailed design development of the project.

However, before addressing such matters and assessing the proposed modifications to the building design, we suggest that some consideration should be given to the parameters of the assessment. In this regard, (and respectfully acknowledging the Director-General's ability to impose further DGR's under this Part), there are a number of matters raised by Willoughby City Council which do not relate to the proposed revisions. Such matters include solar protection devices on the western elevation; street setbacks; signage and smoking policy; landscaping; seating; awning design; and, the location and design of the Mental Health facility.

In this regard, whilst we will attempt to respond to such matters as is reasonable, it is respectfully submitted that due consideration is given to the relevance of such submissions and request that the consideration of the proposal be limited to the relevant modifications and not the already approved elements of the scheme.

To provide some further context to this response, we understand that the Department acknowledges the necessity for the Community Health Building to meet the functional and operational requirements of the end user groups, whilst also encouraging further design development to address matters related to the scale of the building and its relationship to the streetscape. As requested, it is proposed to respond to all such matters by addressing those matters in the Council submission.

In summary, and as discussed in detail below, the amended design not only fully address those relevant planning and design issues raised by Council but does not hinder the functional capability of the facility.

Proposed Amendments

1. Eastern façade to retain the originally approved design elements and façade treatment of dividing the building into three main parts, with a central recessed glazed section;
2. Additional glazing introduced by lowering the sill levels of the ground floor windows fronting Herbert Street by 500mm;

3. Change in materials from red face brick to “Bowral Blue” as per the originally approved design.

Please refer to architectural drawings prepared by Cox Richardson and Photomontages by C3Di enclosed.

Response to Matters – Willoughby City Council

1-2 – Eastern Elevation - The proposed retention of the central recessed glazed section and the vertical division of the eastern facade responds directly to Council's requested design amendments in this regard. The two building portions at either side of the glazed section will be defined, or “framed”, by metal composite clad elements, outlining the marginally recessed horizontally proportioned floors.

The central glazed section will further articulate the façade and provide a source of activity, light and visual interest. The glazing at this section at ground level will be from floor to ceiling, whilst the upper levels will be further modulated by the use of clear glass and colour backed glass sections.



Figure 1: Photomontage - Eastern Elevation.

3 – Northern and Southern Elevations – The northern and southern elevations continue the same method of articulating the facades by framing and recessing portions of the building, and by varying the colour and texture of materials.

4 – Additional Glazing:

- Eastern Elevation - The ground floor Herbert Street façade has been further activated by the lowering of the proposed window sill heights by 500mm and the consequent greater visual interaction between the facility and the public domain.
- North-East Corner - The north-east aspect of the building is considered to be satisfactorily activated and integrated into the campus through the considered location and design of the approved café; out door seating; street tree planting and landscaping.

The upper portions of this elevation will be treated in a similar fashion to other street frontages as described above, being consistent with Council's requested design amendments.

- South-East Corner – Likewise, the south east corner is considered to be satisfactorily articulated by landscaping and the continuation of similar façade modulation techniques as like the remainder of the building.

5 - Additional Landscaping – As indicated on the submitted photomontage, further landscaping is proposed around the main entry, in planter boxes below the enlarged windows. The proposed landscaping may be formalised in the approval by an appropriately worded condition.

6 – Public seating – Public seating is proposed as part of re-development of the former mortuary site. Seating around the entry to the Community Health Building is likely to encourage crowding and will not assist in achieving the objectives of an accessible, identifiable and safe entry.

7 – Smoking Policy Signs – The provision of signs is addressed by SC41 of the Project Approval in terms of the preparation and implementation of a campus-wide Signage Strategy. Smoking Policy is for the consideration of NSW Health.

8 – Awning Design – The proposed glazed awning will provide shelter to the main entry and drop off area to the building and will wrap around the north-east corner to other ancillary entries. In the context of this development approval and the streetscape context, the provision of awnings over the public pavement is considered to be impracticable, especially since the Community Health Building is setback 4m further than any other building on Herbert Street.

9 – Shading devices on western elevation – The thermal capacity of the building was assessed during the design development of the building to be satisfactory in this regard. If required, we will be happy to provide further supporting material in this regard.

10 – Mental Health Unit Design – The design of this component of the Community Health Building has been critical to not only the success of the facility but also to the integration of this specialised form of health care within the campus. The location of the facility, its entries, design of the courtyards and outdoor areas have been specifically designed in response to wide consultation with end user groups including mental health practitioners.

We trust that the proposed amendments and the further information provided with respect to the Project Approval satisfy the requested design modifications by Council. With regard to fundamental issues related to the functionality of the building, as acknowledged by the Department, we understand that the design amendments have been accomplished without impacting adversely in this regard.

If we may be of further assistance or you wish to discuss the content of this letter further, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned on 8233 9942.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Robb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Robb
Associate Director