



Planning

Section 75W Modification Royal North Shore Hospital, Acute Hospital & Community Health Facility MP08_0172 Mod 1

Modification of the Minister's Approval under Section 75W of the
Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

March 2010



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1. Project Background

On 26 September 2006, the then Minister for Planning declared the Royal North Shore Hospital redevelopment a Critical Infrastructure Project. A Concept Plan was subsequently approved (on 13 April 2007), providing for the consolidation of the outdated piecemeal buildings into 8 integrated and more efficient buildings, with an increase in the usable hospital floor space.

The Acute Hospital and Community Health Facility is the third project to be approved onsite under the concept plan and was approved by the then Minister on 19 June 2009. It provides for the staged demolition of buildings onsite and construction of an Acute Hospital building, community health building and a multistorey car park.

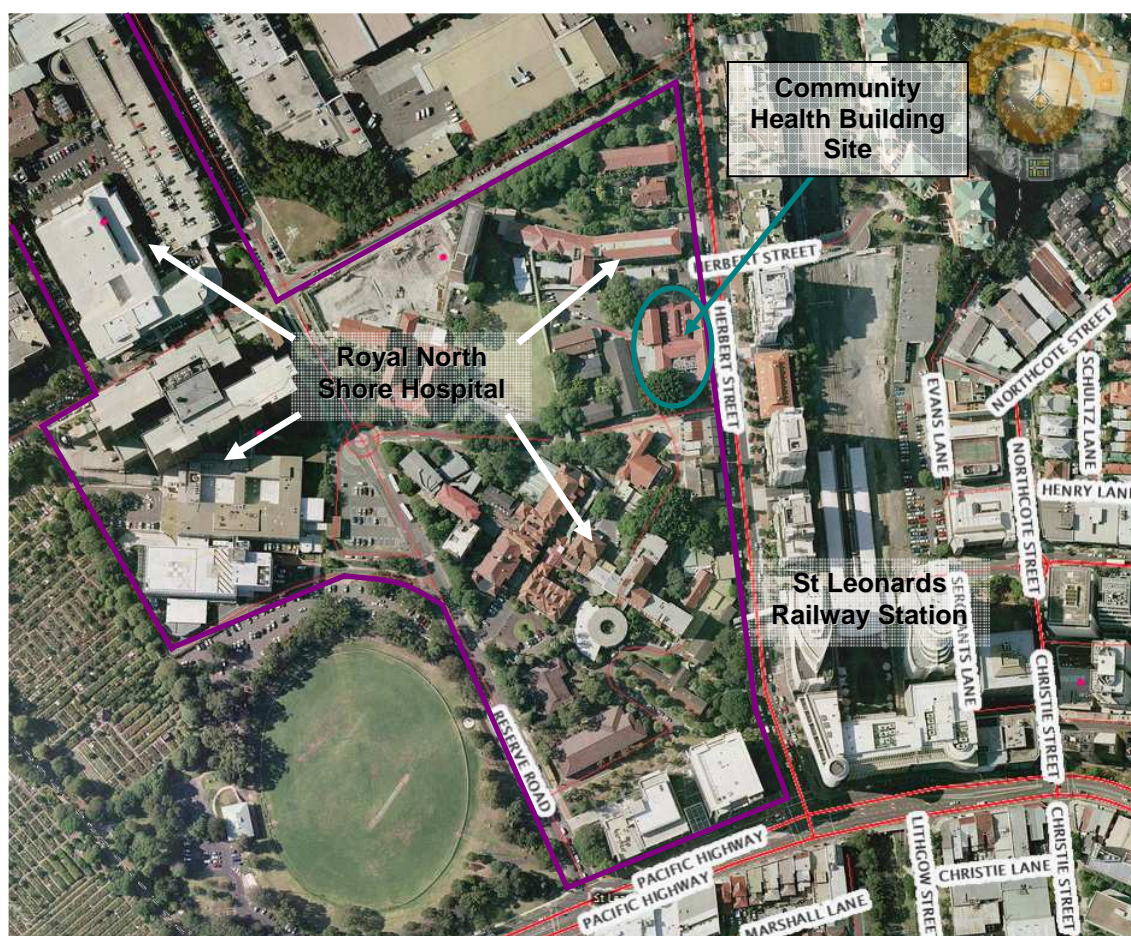


Figure 1 – Hospital and surrounds

2. Proposed Modification

NSW Health now proposes some minor modifications to the design and layout of the Community Health Building to provide a more usable space for the proposed use (with a better layout and greater privacy for building occupants). The proposed modifications are described in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 3.

Table 1 – Proposed Modifications

Aspect	Description
Redistribution of the upper level massing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As approved, Level 5 would occupy the full building footprint and Level 6 would be set back from the southern façade (by approximately 18 metres), occupying two thirds of the length of the building (see Figure 2).In the proposed modification both Level 5 and 6 would be setback

	<p>from the floors below, (approximately 6m from the southern facade) (ie the Level 5 footprint would be reduced and the Level 6 footprint would increase) (see Figure 3).</p> <p><i>Note: in the approved plans (in Figure 2) the ground floor was originally labelled level 1, but in Figure 3 it was labelled ground floor. To ensure consistency between plans labels have been added to Figure 2 (in purple) marking the equivalent levels. (Levels discussed in this document assume there is a ground floor)</i></p>
Façade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alterations to the façade treatment to accommodate the modified footprint of levels 5 and 6, and to provide greater privacy for occupants of the building.
Increased height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.6m above the approved building height, to a finished level of 114.6m
Increased floor area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 9,955 to 10,332m²
Internal layout changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor changes to the internal layout to reflect the footprint changes and end users requirements.
Parking and Loading Dock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To separate the loading dock from the car park by creating a loading bay area.



Figure 2 – Approved Community Health Building (east elevation)



Figure 3 – Proposed Community Health Building (east elevation)

3. Statutory Context

Approval Authority

The Minister was the approval authority for the original project application and is consequently the approval authority for this application. On 25 January 2010 the Minister delegated his powers and functions as an approval authority to modify project approvals under Section 75W of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act). This delegation extends to the Directors in the Major Projects Assessments Division, where there are less than 10 public submissions objecting to the modification request. As no public submissions were received, this modification application meets the terms of the delegation and consequently the Director of Government Land and Social Projects may determine the application under delegated authority.

Exhibition and Notification

Under Section 75W of the EP&A Act, the Department is not required to notify or exhibit the application. Nonetheless, the Department consulted with Willoughby City Council and made the project publicly available on the Department's website.

Council raised a number of concerns about the design of the original modification proposal. These are discussed in Section 4 below.

Sydney Water also provided general comments and did not raise any concerns with the proposal.

No public submissions were received.

4. Assessment

The Department has assessed the Environmental Assessment, submissions and the Proponent's response to submissions and considers the key issues are:

- Consistency with the concept plan and project approval;
- Design and visual amenity impacts; and
- Vehicle access and pedestrian safety.

These issues are considered in detail below.

Consistency with Concept Plan and Project Approval

The Department has considered the proposed facility against the limits approved in the concept plan and project approval (see Table 2). Table 2 demonstrates that the modifications are generally consistent with the height and gross floor area (GFA) limits in the concept plan. While the building would be slightly (1.6m) higher than the building height approved in the project approval (and also have a slightly larger GFA), as outlined in the 'Design and Visual Amenity Impacts' section below, these increases are considered acceptable.

Table 2 – Height and Gross Floor Area

Aspect	Consideration
Building Height and Overshadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The project approval allowed for a building height of 109.9 – 113 metres.• The modification would be within the street frontage limit of 109.9m with a finished level of 109.5m, but would be 1.6 metres higher than the approved height of the facility (113m), with a finished level of 114.6m.• To determine the appropriate height controls for the precinct, the concept plan included a composite building height map, primarily based on solar access principles. This map recommended

	<p>heights of 110m (AHD) at the street frontage and 120-130m for the remainder of the Community Health Building.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed building is considered to be consistent with these levels with a finished level of 114.6m and a street frontage height of 109.5m.
Gross Floor Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The modification would increase the floor area of the Community Health Facility by almost 400m². Although larger than the approved facility, the total GFA for the project would still be less than that approved in the concept plan (37,365m² for precinct 6). The increase is considered to be minor and can be accommodated with minimal impacts on the bulk and scale of the building.

Design and visual amenity impacts

Council raised a number of concerns with the design and visual impact of the facility as originally proposed to be modified (see Figure 4). These included concerns about the:

- removal of the externally visible central light well, and the resulting:
 - loss of glass elements;
 - loss of natural light and amenity; and
 - the monolithic scale;
- lack of effective design articulation, to manage the building's bulk and scale, resulting in an institutional form; and
- lack of integration of the roof scape mesh plant enclosures.



Figure 4 – Proposed Community Health Building design as originally submitted

The Department agreed that the proposed design could be improved and the Proponent subsequently revised the design to address the concerns raised by Council and the Department. In particular, the Proponent reinstated the central light well which is considered to substantially reduce the perceived bulk and scale of the facility by dividing it into parts, softening the building's appearance, providing natural light and creating an open and welcoming internal atmosphere (see Figure 5).



Figure 5 – Artists impression of the proposed Community Health Facility

The Department understands the need for the modifications to the building massing (to create a more usable space for the end use). While the height and upper level massing would increase slightly, the upper levels would be set back from the street frontage. In particular, there would be a 2m setback from the building line, for the upper level plant. Accordingly, the increase of 1.6m above the approved building height is considered acceptable, as it is likely to have minimal visual impact.

The Department is satisfied that the building massing would be adequately managed with upper level setbacks, façade treatments and the reinstatement of the central light well, which also creates an open and welcoming atmosphere. Consequently, the Department considers that the final design proposed is appropriate for the end use.

Access and pedestrian safety

The modification would separate the car park and loading dock, providing an additional access which would have the potential to create vehicle/pedestrian conflicts. The Department requested additional information on how this would be managed.

The Proponent subsequently confirmed that the traffic volumes accessing the car park and loading dock would be low (approximately 30 vehicles an hour would access the car park) and provided advice on the measures that would be implemented to minimise potential conflicts.

Council did not comment on this issue.

The Department notes that the conditions require the Proponent to comply with all relevant Australian Standards. This includes access ways. Further, to ensure that potential conflicts would be minimised, the following measures would be implemented as part of the proposed modification:

- the two access points are to be separated by a 1.2m wide median;
- access is to be controlled by an intercom and roller door system; and
- signage would also be installed on the exit ramps to warn vehicles to "Give Way to Pedestrians".

The Department is satisfied that the access would be designed to meet Australian Standards and that the additional measures listed above would ensure that the potential for pedestrian/vehicle conflicts are minimised.

5. Recommended Conditions of Approval

The Department has recommended changes to the existing project approval to include the modification application within the terms of approval. No additional conditions or modifications to the conditions were considered necessary.

6. Conclusion

The Department has assessed the merits of the proposal in accordance with the requirements of Clause 8B of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*. This assessment found that the proposed modification involves minor layout and design changes that would improve the suitability of the facility for the end use and that are unlikely to cause any significant impacts.

Consequently, the Department considers the proposed modification is in the public interest, and should be approved, subject to conditions.

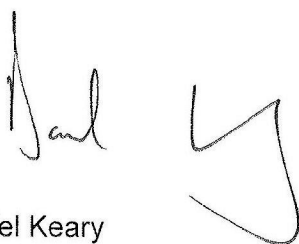
7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Director:

- approves the modification under Section 75W of the EP&A Act; and
- signs the attached instrument (tagged A).

 23/3/10

Alix Carpenter
A/Team Leader
Government Land and Social Projects

 23/3/10

Daniel Keary
Director
Government Land and Social Projects
As delegate of the Minister for Planning