

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

19 October 2010

Acting Team Leader
Government Land and Social Projects
Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Ben Eveleigh



Dear Sir,

Re: Exhibition of Royal North Shore Hospital modification involving provision of a helipad on the roof of, and an increase in height to, the Acute Hospital building (Major Project Application 08_0172 Modification 3)

Willoughby Council continues to support the redevelopment of the Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH) and commends the State Government for its commitment to this project in the Willoughby LGA.

It is noted that the subject modification involves provision of a helipad on the roof (south eastern side) of the Acute Hospital building – which is in addition to the existing helipad located on the Douglas Building. The subject modification also proposes an increase in height to the Acute Hospital of 900mm.

Proposed Helipad

Council supports the location of a helipad on the roof (Level 11) of the Acute Hospital and the retention of the existing helipad on the Douglas Building. Council had previously written to the then Minister for Planning, The Hon Kristina Keneally MP, on 28 April 2009 regarding its concern that the helipad servicing the hospital was to remain solely on the Douglas Building with no such facility on the Acute Hospital.

Council also supports the preferred flight path chosen, being from the south west over the Gore Hill Oval. This is the same flight path currently used for the helipad on the Douglas Building.

However Council is concerned and disappointed in regards the specific location on the Acute Hospital roof of the helipad. The helipad is located on an elevated platform on the south eastern side of the roof, above the main pedestrian entrance, and towards the corner of the Acute Hospital closest to Eileen Street and Herbert Street.

Reference: SPP-2007/4
Enquiries: Greg Woodhams
Phone: 9777 7650
Availability: 8.30am-10.00am, otherwise by appointment

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Council is concerned regarding the amenity impacts, with particular regard to noise, on the residential flat buildings on the opposite side of Herbert Street and the residential flat buildings to be built in the surplus land precincts identified on the approved Concept Plan (as modified) for the hospital site as Precincts 4, 5 and 7. It is noted in the report dated August 2010 prepared by Urbis accompanying the exhibited modification that the location is based on:

- *Clinical functionality. The optimal location for the helipad is that which provides the shortest, safest most immediate access to the Priority Lift which connects the helipad to the appropriate receiving areas of the Operating Theatres, ICU, and Emergency Department. This lift is located in the easternmost core of the building and requires the helipad to be located in the eastern end of the building.*
- *The location of the recently completed Kolling building to the north of the acute hospital site precludes the helipad being positioned in the northern half of the building.*
- *The height of the helipad is subsequently determined by the Approach / Departure Path to the final Approach and Take Off area (FATO). The proposed helipad has been located as low to the roof and as far to the north as possible without compromising this critical safety zone.*
- *Future development potential of the hospital which includes expansion of the northern part of the building pursuant to the Concept Approval.*

The proposal fails to take into account limiting amenity impacts on existing and future neighbouring residential flat buildings and mixed commercial/residential buildings as identified in the Concept Plan (as modified) for the Hospital site.

Council is particularly concerned with noise impacts when helicopters are stationary on the helipad for a period of time with the blades turning. It is noted in the supporting report prepared by Acoustic Logic Consultancy (Appendix H of the abovementioned Urbis report) that impacts are assessed within the development (being the hospital) and design solutions provided. However no mention is made to the design solutions required in other precincts identified under the Concept Plan (as modified). It is also noted in the Acoustic Logic Consultancy report that there will be an exceedance of the applicable noise levels of 95dB(A) at the top floor residences located east of the site on Herbert Street when a helicopter flies directly over the top. Such a sound level is unacceptable for residential properties. This impact is likely to also apply to the future high rise residential towers on the divestment lands.

Council is concerned with the lighting for the helipad, with particular regard to the upper levels of the neighbouring residential flat buildings in Herbert Street and future mixed commercial / residential buildings to be located on the divestment lands. No details on lighting have been provided. It is Council's opinion that the lighting of the helipad should not be permanent (24 hours a day, seven days a week) but only on a as required basis, to be turned on when required and turned off when not required.

Council is also concerned with the impact on the air quality of the surrounding hospital pedestrian areas and the neighbouring residential flat buildings in Herbert Street and future mixed commercial / residential buildings to be located on the divestment lands from helicopters using the helipad – particularly when stationary. It is noted in the supporting report prepared by CPP Wind Engineering and Air Quality Consultants (Appendix I of the

abovementioned Urbis report) *“that a qualitative wind assessment study of the proposed Royal North Shore Helipad was conducted to assess the effect of the development on the wind conditions for approaching helicopters and for transmission of exhaust fumes into the Acute building air intakes.”* No assessment has been carried out on the impact on surrounding hospital pedestrian areas and the neighbouring residential flat buildings in Herbert Street and future mixed commercial / residential buildings to be located on the divestment lands. It is Council's opinion that such an assessment should be carried prior to any approval and forwarded to Council for its review.

In regards the above, Council requests that:

- a) The helipad be located further west and north away from its proposed location. This location appears to have been chosen because it suits the existing internal layout design of relevant sections of the Acute Hospital. Council believes that deciding the location of the helipad warrants a review of the relevant sections of the hospital, which may result in internal layout changes, in order to deliver the optimum design outcome for the hospital as well as the surrounding area.
- b) If Point a) is not adopted, then as a minimum requirement, appropriate sound attenuation barriers must be introduced to the design of the helipad on the east and south sides so that noise is minimised and the appearance of the barriers are designed so that they do not contribute to the bulk and scale of the Acute Hospital when viewed in particular from Herbert Street. In this regard, appropriate information demonstrating achievement of this change to the helipad should be submitted for Council's consideration prior to any approval.
- c) Helicopter movements are to stay within the 'Preferred Helicopter Approach Path' as far as practically and safely possible. It is requested that movements within the 'Approach Path Not Preferred' (described as 'Optional use for certain wind conditions only' that covers a wide arc to the east of the site, over the Naremburn Conservation Area and a number of high rise residential flat buildings along Herbert Street), be kept to a absolute minimum. In this regard Council requests that a condition be placed on any approval requiring the flight path to comply with the information submitted with this modification.
- d) That the flight path and operation of the helicopter be subject to a review after 12 months of operation, including notification of residents in Herbert Street, to identify if any issues have arisen and what mitigation measures are to be put in place.
- e) That lighting of the helipad not be permanent (24 hours a day, seven days a week) but only on a as required basis, to be turned on when required and turned off when not required. Furthermore a lighting plan, that would also contain the above operational details, be provided for Council's review and that a condition be placed on any approval requiring adherence to this plan.
- f) An assessment be carried out by an appropriate expert in regards the impact on the air quality of the surrounding hospital pedestrian areas and the neighbouring residential flat buildings in Herbert Street and future mixed commercial / residential buildings to be located on the divestment lands from helicopters using the helipad –

particularly when stationary. Furthermore that this assessment be provided for Council's review.

Increased height of Acute Hospital

Council notes that the floor to ceiling heights of Levels 3, 4 and 5 of the Acute Hospital have been increased by 300mm each, resulting in an overall increase to the building height of 900mm.

Council raises no objection to this change.

Willoughby Council seeks to satisfactorily resolve with the Department of Planning and the proponent the helipad's location, design and use in order to ensure the best possible outcome for the hospital redevelopment and the surrounding area. Council trusts that its submission will be given the appropriate consideration. Please contact Craig O'Brien, Strategic Planner, on 9777 7647 if you have questions on any aspect of this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Greg Woodhams
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

Per:

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