

**MODIFICATION REQUEST:
Royal North Shore Hospital
Acute Hospital and Community Health
Facility (MP 08_0172 MOD 4)**

Modification to Acute Hospital Building:
Redesign of Level 9 to accommodate 60 inpatient
beds.



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

August 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theiss Pty Ltd has submitted an application (MP08_0172 MOD 4) seeking approval to modify the Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH) Acute Hospital and Community Health Facility Project Approval (MP08_0172) to redesign Level 9 of the Acute Hospital Building. This includes the replacement of the administrative area (primarily office space) with 60 inpatient beds for aged and medical / surgical uses including 120m² of additional floor space. The proponent advises the proposed modification seeks to address future bed demand envisaged within the hospital campus.

The EA was placed on the Department's website and Willoughby Council was notified of the proposal. Willoughby City Council support the proposed changes to Level 9 but request consideration be given to additional visitor parking spaces to cater for the additional beds. The proponent responded indicating the additional visitor parking can be accommodated within approved parking provision for the RNSH site as a whole.

The proposed modifications are considered to be minor and will not impact upon the appearance of the overall development or on neighbouring properties. The Department is also satisfied that sufficient car parking spaces have been previously provided to cater for any additional demand, noting the site is located within walking distance of a train station and bus services.

The Department considers that the proposed modification for additional in-patient beds does not alter the overall nature, needs and or justification for the approved project. The current modification is minor, consistent with the terms of the original consent and is recommended for approval.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	SITE	5
2.	MAJOR PROJECT APPROVAL	6
3.	PROPOSED MODIFICATION	8
4.	STATUTORY CONTEXT	10
	4.1 Modification of the Minister's Approval	10
	4.2 Permissibility	10
	4.3 Delegation	10
5.	CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSIONS	10
6.	CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS	11
	6.1 Car Parking	11
	6.2 Additional In-Patient Beds	13
	6.3 Built Form	12
8.	CONCLUSION	13
9.	RECOMMENDATION	14
APPENDIX A	MODIFICATION REQUEST	15
APPENDIX B	SUBMISSIONS	16
APPENDIX C	RELEVANT REPORTS OR DOCUMENTS	17
APPENDIX D	APPROVED PARKING PLAN (MP08_0172)	18
APPENDIX E	MODIFYING INSTRUMENT	19

1. SITE

The Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH) site is located in St Leonards, approximately 4 kilometres to the north of the Sydney CBD. The RNSH site has an area of approximately 12 hectares and comprises two distinct areas; the private hospital to the north of Westbourne Avenue and, a public hospital to the south of Westbourne Avenue (Refer to Figure 1). The main hospital frontages are to the Pacific Highway and Herbert Street. St Leonards Station is within walking distance (approximately 250 metres) from the Pacific Highway and Herbert Street entrances to the hospital.

The hospital is a major teaching and research hospital for northern Sydney, providing state wide services for burns and spinal injuries, and specialist services including surgical, paediatrics, maternity and community services. The principal facilities are housed in the Douglas Building, Building 1 and Building 2 (the 13 storey, largest building on the site).

The main access routes to the hospital are from Westbourne Street (west) and Reserve Road, off the Pacific Highway. Limited access for staff is available from Herbert Street. The multistorey car park adjoining the private hospital provides most parking spaces available on the site, with access via Westbourne Street (west) and Reserve Road.

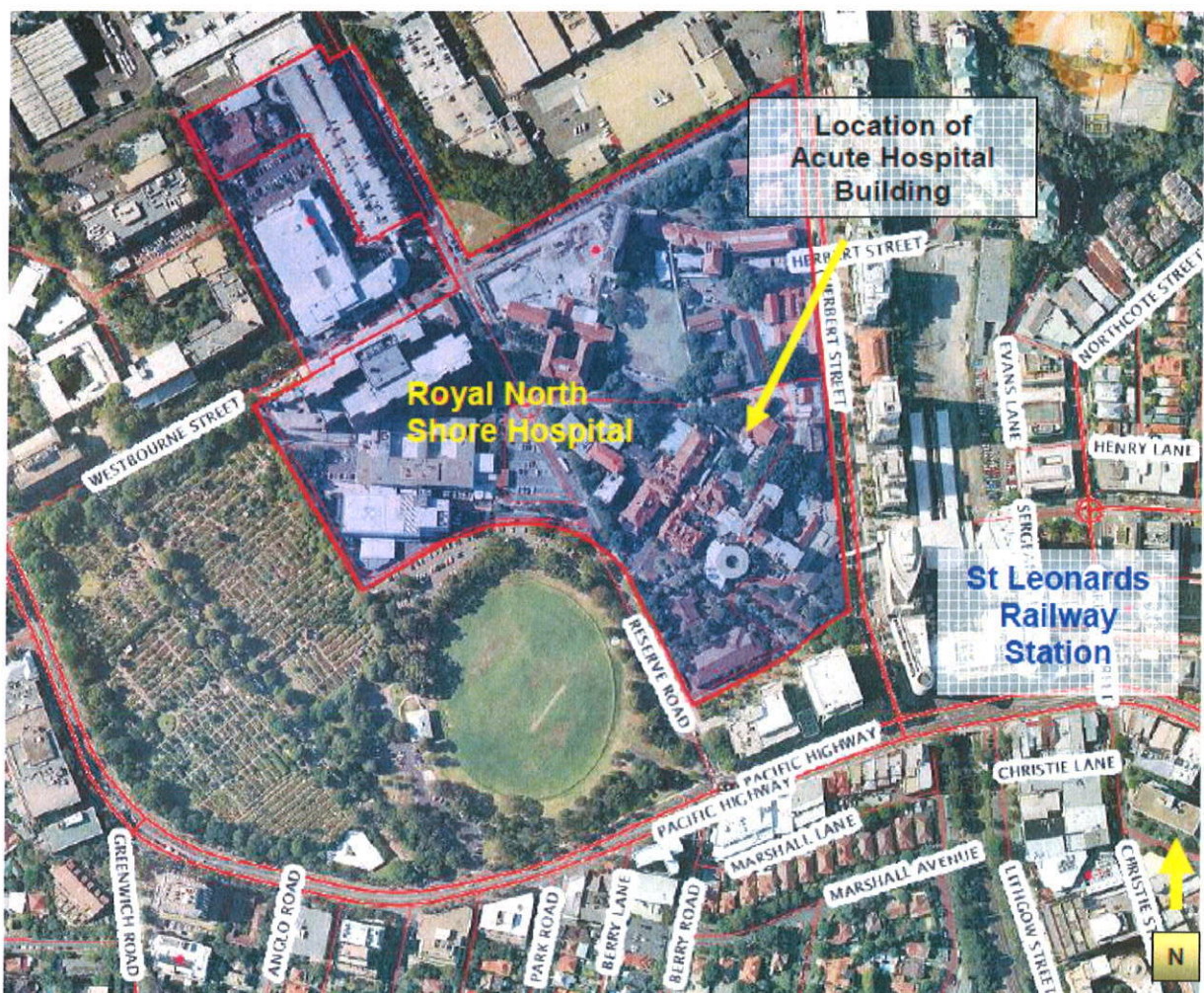


Figure 1: Royal North Shore Hospital site

2. MAJOR PROJECT APPROVAL

On 26 September 2006, the then Minister for Planning declared the Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH) redevelopment a Critical Infrastructure Project. On 13 April 2007, the then Minister approved a Concept Plan under MP06_0051 providing for the consolidation of the existing piecemeal buildings into 8 integrated and more efficient buildings with an increase in the usable hospital floor space.

On 19 June 2009, the then Minister of Planning approved the Acute Hospital and Community Health Facility under Project Approval MP08_0172, which comprised the staged demolition of buildings on-site, and construction of the Acute Hospital Building, Community Health Facility, pedestrian and public domain works and a multistorey car park for 576 vehicles (staff and visitor parking).

The Acute Hospital Building, subject of this Modification request, forms part of the RNSH redevelopment. The building has been designed to contain 9 levels, 8 of which will be above ground. The main entry is on the western side from Reserve Road, with ambulance bays and loading docks on the southern side. The proposed uses in this building include emergency, ICU, medical imaging, cancer care, cardiology, pathology, surgery, administration and support services (Refer to Figure 2 and 3).



Figure 2: Approved Concept Plan (MP08_0172) for the RNSH site, including 8 development precincts. The Acute Hospital Building is located within the red boundary, labelled 1.

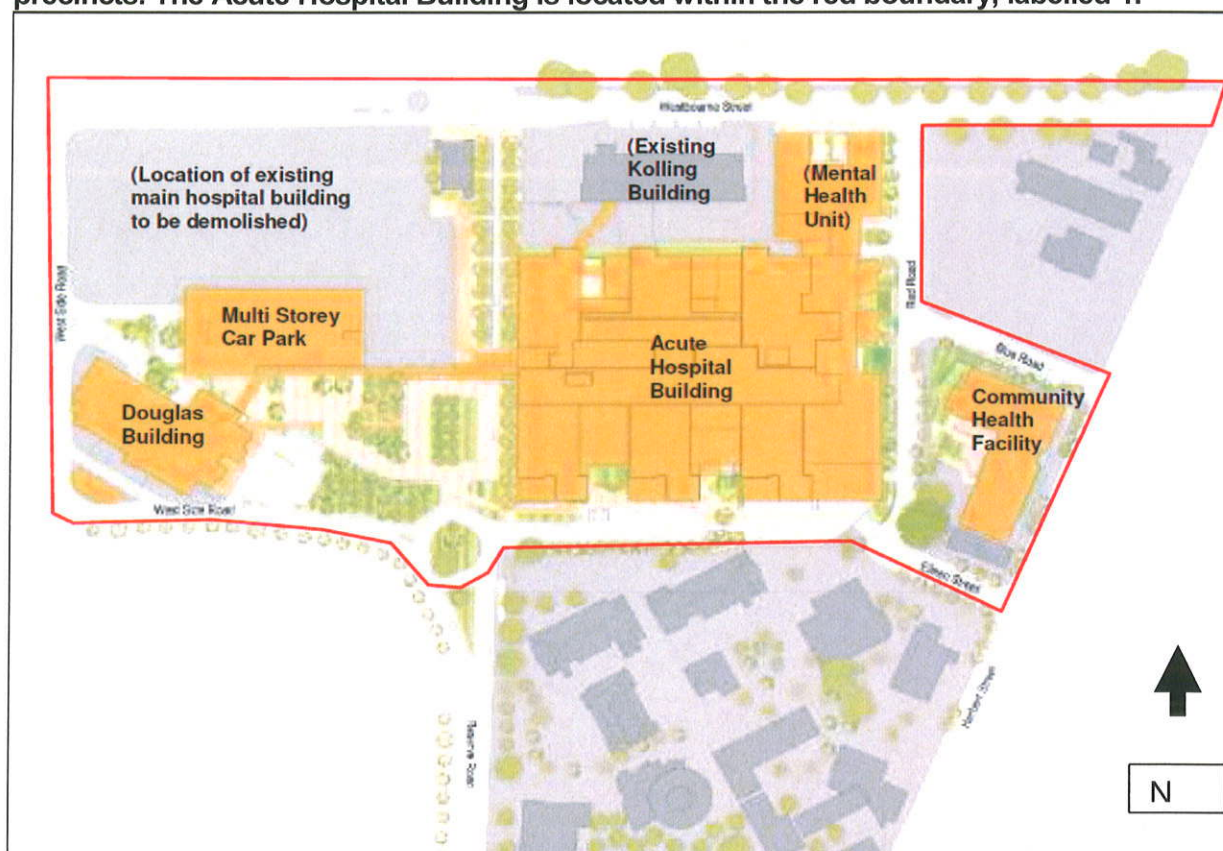


Figure 3 – Acute Hospital building set within RNSH private hospital grounds as approved by MP08_0172.

The Acute Hospital and Community Health Facility Project Approval (MP08_0172 has previously been modified by:

- Mod 1 – (MP08_0172 (MOD 1)) Approved on 23 March 2010, involving minor changes to the design and layout of the Community Health Building; and
- Mod 2 – (MP08_0172 (MOD 2)) Approved on 3 August 2010, involving the demolition of Building 19 'Mortuary' and construction of a car park.
- Mod 3 – (MP08_0172 (MOD 3)) Approved on 19 January 2011, involving a 900mm height increase for services and addition of a helipad to the Acute Hospital Building.

A consolidated instrument is at Appendix F of this report.

3. PROPOSED MODIFICATION

The current modification is limited to Level 9 of the Acute Hospital building and comprises:

- an increase of 120m² floor space;
- relocation of the northern wall of Level 9 to align with lower level;
- alteration of fenestration pattern and arrangement of materials (coloured panels and windows) along north, east and west sides of the building and;
- change of use from administrative support function (primarily office space) to 60 inpatient beds for aged and medical/surgical uses.

The purpose of the modification is to relocate administrative functions and to increase patient capacity within level 9 of the Acute Hospital building. The displaced administrative functions will be relocated within existing buildings on site.

The proposed modification is generally consistent with the terms of the approved Project Application, inclusive of floor space controls. The proposed changes to the floor plan are shown in Figures 4 and 5.

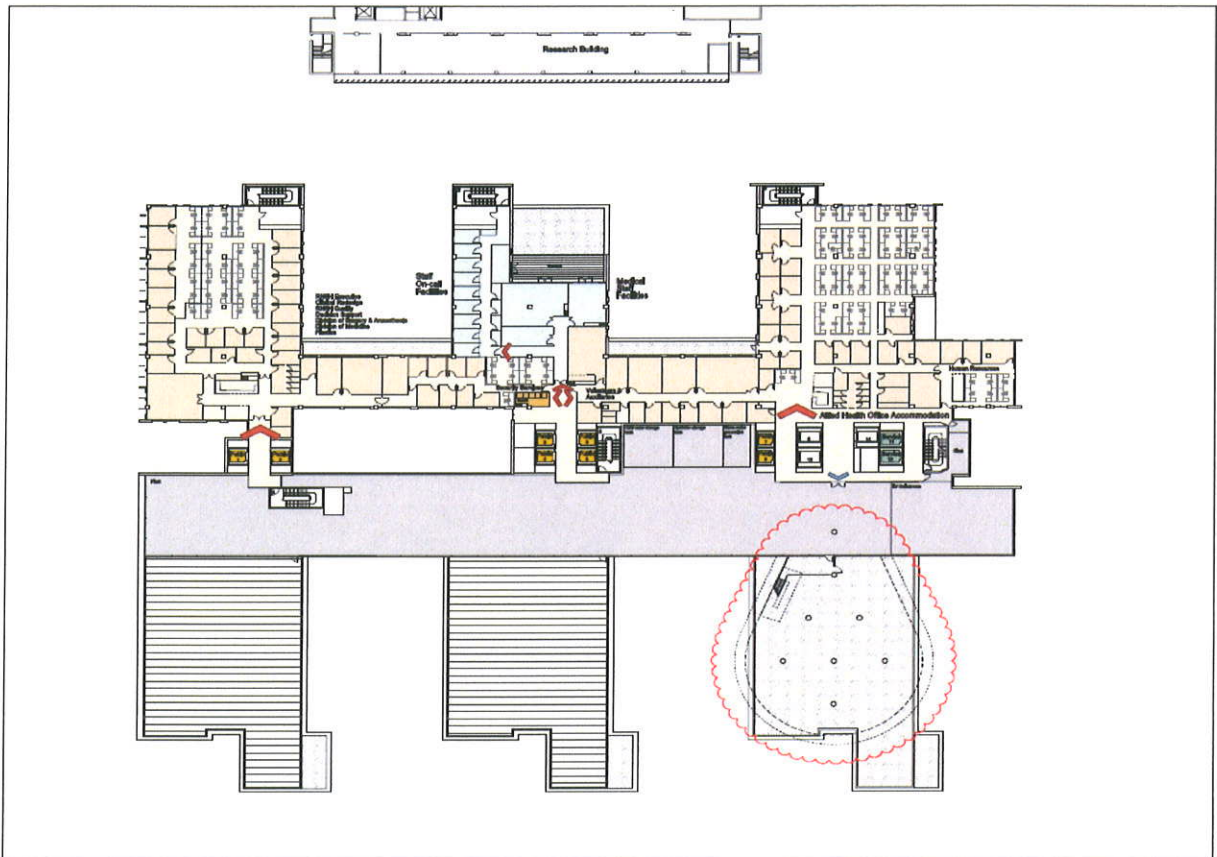


Figure 4: Approved Level 9 Floor Plan set in context of earlier modification (MP08_0172 MOD 3) for a helipad landing area circled red.

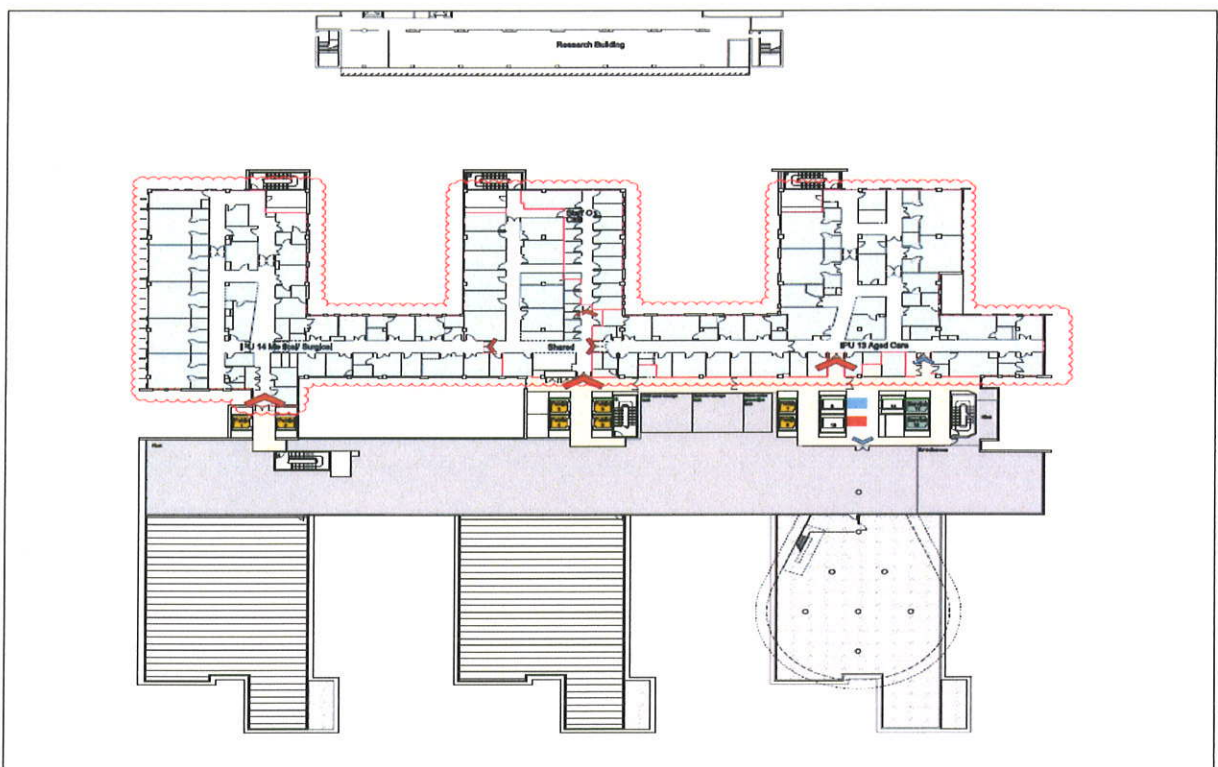


Figure 5: Proposed Level 9 floor plan for 60 additional in-patient beds.

4. STATUTORY CONTEXT

4.1 Modification of the Minister's Approval

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 project as modified would be consistent with the original approval.

Given the extent of the proposed modification to the approved development by way of extended floor space along with internal and external changes and associated environmental impacts principally from car parking demand, a formal 75W Modification Application is considered necessary to determine the proposal. Overall, the modification is considered within the terms of the existing approval. The application can therefore be approved pursuant to the powers and discretion available under Section 75W of the Act.

4.2 Permissibility

The site is zoned 5(a) Special Uses – Hospital under Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 1995. The proposed development is not prohibited by the zoning. In any case, as the site is classified as Critical Infrastructure, the zoning does not affect permissibility of the proposed development.

4.3 Delegation

On 28 May 2011, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure delegated his powers and functions under section 75W of the EP&A Act to the Planning Assessment Commission where:

- the application is not for major infrastructure development and the proponent is not a public authority (other than a local authority), and
- a statement has been made disclosing a reportable political donation in relation to the project, and
- a statement has been made disclosing a reportable political donation in connection with any previous concept plan or project application.

The Proponent has disclosed that they have made a reportable political donation. The Planning Assessment Commission must therefore determine the modification request.

5. CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSIONS

Under Section 75W of the EP&A Act, the Department is not required to notify or exhibit the application. The proposal involves a minor modification which does not result in any significant adverse impacts on adjoining property owners; therefore the application was not publicly exhibited. Notwithstanding, the modification was placed on the Department's website and referred to Willoughby Council for comment.

No public submissions were received on the modification request.

Willoughby Council indicated it supports the proposed changes however have raised a concern that there will be no additional parking provided for the building. Council requests consideration for the provision of additional visitor parking spaces to cater for the 60 additional beds.

6. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The Department considers the key issues associated with this modification to be car parking; additional in-patient beds; and built form, discussed as follows:

6.1 Car Parking

Willoughby Council request the Department give consideration to additional visitor parking spaces to cater for the additional demand resulting from the proposed in-patient beds, consistent with the relevant DCP.

The Willoughby Development Control Plan (WDCP) requires car parking provision at a rate of:

- 1 space per 3 beds (visitor car parking);
- 1 space per registered medical practitioner and;
- 1 space per 2 employees.

The current modification provides for an additional 60 in-patient beds which requires an additional 15 employees on duty, at any one time. Based on the WDCP parking rates, the modification would require an additional 27.5 spaces, made up of 7.5 employee spaces and 20 visitor spaces. However, the proposal does not seek to increase on-site car parking for the additional beds.

In considering the overall car parking demand for the RNSH site, the Department notes that the original project approval (MP08_0172) increased the supply of on-site parking by 353 (16%) spaces, from 2197 to 2550. The total car parking figure (2550) is made up of, 974 visitor spaces, 1333 staff spaces and 243 spaces for short term drop off, disabled, ambulance and service spaces.

The original approval however, sought to improve the design and layout of the existing hospital operation with only a minor increase in hospital beds. As such the volume of additional traffic/parking generation resulting from the approved development was considered to be negligible.

From this, the Department considers that the RNSH site has already been provided with increased parking supply to accommodate the proportionately marginal increase in demand (approximately 1% of the approved 2550 parking spaces) that may be generated by the proposed modification.

Notwithstanding, the Department also notes the following points specific to visitor and staff car parking spaces:

Visitor Parking

- As part of the overall increase in parking spaces (outlined above) the original project approval adjusted the car parking mix between staff and visitor spaces in order to provide a greater proportion of visitor car parking spaces on-site. This resulted in an increase of 572 visitor parking spaces, from 402 to 974 (142%) in response to the noted demand for visitor spaces at the time and a reduction of staff car parking spaces of 339 spaces from 1672 to 1333.
- The Department considers that it would be unreasonable to require further on-site visitor parking given the currently approved provision of 974 visitor spaces is more than double the 402 spaces previously provided on-site for a similar intensification of use. Also, the 20 visitor spaces required by the WDCP are only 2% of the overall visitor parking provision on site.
- It is further noted that the site lies within a highly accessible location within close walking distance of St Leonards Train Station and frequent bus services along the Pacific Highway.

For the reasons above the Department does not consider that any further on-site visitor parking is required.

Staff Parking

- As above, the original project approval increased the overall provision of parking spaces however reduced staff car parking numbers from 1672 to 1333 (reduction of 339). This reduction was a result of a careful consideration of parking demand as demonstrated in the Transport Report prepared by Hyder Consulting in support of the project application. At the time of the assessment, the Department accepted the Proponent's view that this was a more accurate allocation having regard to the actual demand for staff parking.
- The overall additional 7.5 staff parking spaces required by the WDCP is less than 0.5% of the overall approved 1333 staff parking spaces.
- A Workplace Travel Plan was also approved as part of the original project application which would encourage public transport use and cycling for staff and thus reduce private vehicle dependency. This plan discourages further on site parking provision given that good levels of available alternative public transport (St Leonards train station and bus routes along the Pacific Highway) are within walking distance.
- Staff car parking demand is influenced by start times for staff and the availability of reliable, alternative public transport. Staff that start shifts at 7am and 1.30pm are more likely to use public transport services during the day.
- The Department considers that parking for staff working shifts outside of normal business hours (who are more likely to drive to work) can be catered for by available paid public parking on site.

For the reasons above the Department does not consider that any further on-site staff parking is required.

6.2 Built Form

The changes to the built form and external appearance of the approved Acute Hospital building are limited to Level 9, as illustrated in **Figure 6** below. When viewed in context of the approved building envelope, the proposed changes are considered to be minor.

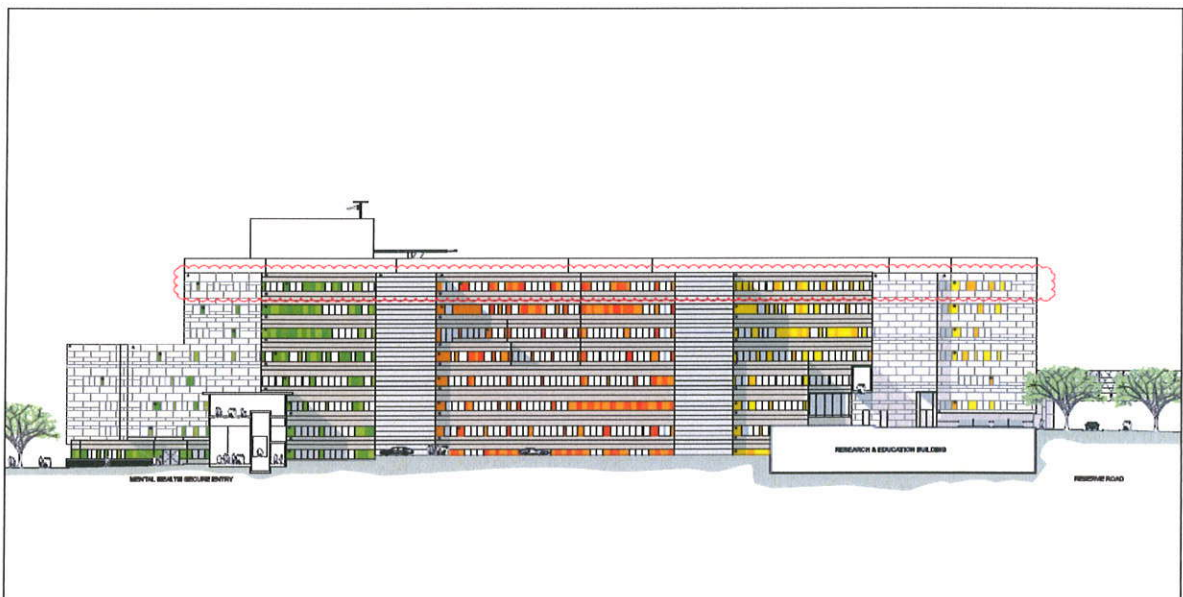


Figure 6: Proposed Level 9 elevation.

The Department is satisfied that the slight enlargement (120sq.m) and change to the fenestration pattern to Level 9 is limited in scope and will not result in adverse visual impacts or significant overshadowing impacts to its surroundings. The proposed modification is therefore supported.

6.3 Additional In-Patient Beds

The Proponent advises the purpose of the modification is to provide for additional beds, close to core hospital functions for inpatient units within the Acute Hospital Building. Administrative functions will be relocated to within existing buildings on site.

The Department notes the additional beds will cater to future demand for clinical services within the Acute Hospital Building. Further, the loss of administrative use in favour of in-patient beds is consistent with uses as approved within the Acute Hospital Building. On this basis, the Department considers additional in-patient hospital beds, in this location, is appropriate and the effect on relocated administrative functions is negligible.

8. CONCLUSION

The Department has assessed the application on its merits and the proposed modification is considered to be reasonable and will not result in any significant changes to the development as approved.

The proposed modification does not change the original assessment as to the site's suitability for this development. The Department is satisfied that sufficient car parking spaces have been previously provided to cater for any additional demand, noting the site is located within proximity to a train station and bus services and other public parking options on site. Furthermore, the modifications to Level 9 are considered to be minor and will not impact upon the appearance of the overall development or neighbouring properties.

The redesign of Level 9 to accommodate 60 additional beds to address future demand for patients will improve access to core hospital functions within the Acute Services Building Inpatient units. The proposal is in the public interest as it will have significant public benefits for the quality of life for people with potentially fatal or chronic illness through improvements in health care. The Modification to provide additional hospital beds is therefore supported subject to the modified conditions.

9. RECOMMENDATION

On 28 May 2011, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure delegated his powers and functions under Section 75W of the EP&A Act to the Planning Assessment Commission in cases where a statement has been made disclosing a reportable political donation in relation to the project.

The Proponent has provided a statement disclosing a reportable political donation with the current modification application.

It is recommended that the Planning Assessment Commission:

- (a) **Consider** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- (b) **Approve** the modification request under delegated authority, subject to conditions; and
- (c) **Sign** the attached Instrument of Modification for MP 08_0054 MOD 4.

Endorsed by

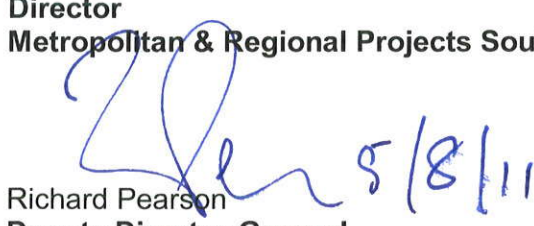


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