

24 January 2012

Ms Pilar Aberasturi
Senior Planner
Metropolitan and Regional Projects South
NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Pilar,

Proposed Modification to Approved Major Project No. 09_0051 – Centre for Obesity, Diabetes & Cardiovascular Disease

I refer to your recent email attaching a copy of the City of Sydney's comments on the proposed Section 75W Application.

Brookfield Multiplex and its design team have carefully reviewed these comments and wish to make some amendments to the application to address the issues contained within Council's letter to enable expedient approval of this application.

We respond to each of the two issues below:

1 Access Road

The alternative alignment of the access road as shown on the plans accompanying the Section 75W application was inadvertently included in the documentation. We apologise for the confusion it may have caused, especially regarding the conflicting comments in the EA Report.

We wish to withdraw this element of the application and have included plans to reflect the existing approved road alignment.

This road alignment issue is currently under review in the context of the wider precinct and it is anticipated that a separate Section 75W modification will be submitted at a later date. As part of preparing that separate application, the design team will carefully review the comments issued by Council in their letter.

2 North-western building alignment (in relation to St John's College)

We have responded to this issue with the assistance of Urbis' Heritage Director (refer below to an excerpt and the attached appendix to this letter), together with design changes and adjustments by the architects Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp (FJMT) to respond to Council's comments about the building alignment in relation to St John's College. Both the formally amended architectural plans and explanatory diagrams by FJMT is attached to this letter.

There are a number of relevant matters that need to be discussed in fully responding to this alignment issue. These are listed below:

1) Approved building encroaches the alignment – modification provides improvement

It is noted the approved building encroaches the alignment stated within Council's letter. The proposed modification reduces this encroachment and provides a linear building form – already improving the spatial relationship of the building over that originally approved.

2) Sightlines to St John's College and the landscape setting

The heritage comments raised by Council have been addressed by heritage specialist Stephen Davies, Director of Urbis, within the separate attachment to this letter. In summary, it is identified that Council's submission refers to a view corridor identified within a 2001 Conservation Management Plan (CMP) prepared by Clive Lucas Stapleton. However, this CMP has been superseded by the "CMP Addendum 2010" prepared in June 2010 for St John's College by NBRSPartners which has not been considered in the Council's submission.

The CMP Addendum acknowledges the future presence of the CODCD medical research building and in particular restates that the "*principal views are from the north and north east and particularly from Parramatta Road and the original entry avenue*". The addendum further states that the "*panoramic views from the south east will no longer be available due to development of the CODCD Medical Research Building...*" and that "*remaining significant views on this plan should be protected and enhanced in any future redevelopment or master planning*". Having regard to the CMP addendum, the proposed redesign of the building retains the significant views of St John's College from the north and north east and the college will be fully viewed from the ovals that provide for the important eastern elevation.

The revised proposal has also significant heritage benefits for the site with regard to the existing approval, including location, design detail and materials resulting in a more compatible building adjacent to St John's with respect to heritage siting.

It is further noted that the approved St John's College extension does not align with any major axes of the existing St John's building. The proposed redesign will establish an appropriate alignment with St John's College that contributes towards a formal spatial relationship with St John's Oval.

3) Increasing setback to the North is not possible due to internal building requirements, urban design considerations and external constraints

An increased setback to the north, by relocation of the building further south cannot be accommodated due a series of factors. In terms of contextual urban design, the South-East façade of the building is aligned with the John Hopkins Drive to provide a clear entry path from Missenden Road and provide connection to the Hospital. A view corridor into, and out of, the University campus and to the oval beyond is also framed by the proposed building alignment. By retaining this position, we have created a far more generous and usable public open space where overshadowing is mitigated by maintaining the distance between the buildings.

The reduction of the building's width to accommodate Council's suggestion would also have significant implications to the internal planning and function of the building. Being a very specialised institutional research and teaching building, there are strict functional relationships, unchangeable modular lab units and briefed areas that are required to be provided. The redesign of the building to accommodate Council's suggestion would result in the building not meeting the University's functional brief and would put the delivery of the project in jeopardy.

4) Alternate design measures to north-western façade provide an improved relationship to St John's College and broader precinct

Notwithstanding the comments in item 3) above, the design team have carefully reviewed the opportunities for a further improved north-west elevation to meet the intent of Council's comments.

Overall design refinements and adjustments were made by FJMT to the north-west sandstone façade in response to Council's comments regarding the relationship to St John's College. The major changes are outlined as follows:

- Introduction of an offset in the sandstone facade at the major vertical circulation 'slot' to reduce the apparent visual bulk of the envelope and to appropriately scale the façade in the context of St John's College.
- Introduction of two additional vertical 'slots' – slightly narrower than the major slot – in the elevation breaks down the length of the façade and relates closer to the proportions of a wing of St John's College and further adds façade surface articulation. These slots reflect the internal function of building as they are mechanical risers.
- Further refinement of the proportions, changes to the rhythm and adjustment of the locations of the vertical slot windows in the sandstone façade to align with interior function/design.
- At the North-West corner of the building, the glazing at ground level is extended further above by raising the sandstone element further to acknowledge the presence of St John's and improve the visual permeability in this area.
- Refinement of the north-west building parapet to step down at the major vertical slot to mitigate the apparent length of the building façade in relation to the context and reflect the topography. The roof plant is also set back to visually mitigate the height as well as being fully screened.
- Introduction of a solid metal facade at Level 1 (Ground) to reflect internal functions (seminar rooms). This assists in providing a recessed base to the sandstone façade. Cladding will be feature vertical louvre/slots and appropriately detailed joints to avoid a blank appearance.

5) Additional minor external changes

In addition to the changes made to the proposal in response to Council's comments regarding the north-western alignment, the ongoing design development process has resulted in other minor design refinement and adjustments that have further improved the building's relationship with the immediate context and broader precinct but also the internal functionality of the building.

The nature of these amendments may ordinarily be appropriate for the post-DA approval process, however (for the sake of completeness and transparency), these minor amendments are indicated on the attached plans prepared by FJMT.

In summary, they involve the following design refinements and adjustments as well as those outlined above for the north-west façade:

South-East Facade

- Introduction of double height canopy to acknowledge the main entry and provide shelter from inclement weather for occupants and visitors alike. Consequently the portal entry element was deleted and the scale of the entry element reduced by half a storey to provide a more appropriate human scale.
- Provision of an increased west core sandstone element to achieve an asymmetric yet harmonious composition and also in response to internal functional planning.
- Changes to the proportions and modulation of horizontal louvre façade in response to the above design refinement.

North-East and South-West Facades

- The North-East and South-West facades of the workplace block have changed from a horizontal louvred facade to a vertical louvre façade where the windows are full-height slots shaded by a vertical louvre blade to provide more appropriate environmental control.
- The riser elements on the North-East and South-West elevations of the laboratory block now have curved corners in order to mitigate the visual bulk and clearly articulate the junction between sandstone and metal panel façade elements.
- The North-East glazed facade on south-east corner returns to allow for the entry canopy to turn the corner and provide shelter from inclement weather over the main student entry of the building.
- Both risers to the North-East and one riser on the South-West of the laboratory block now meet the ground, primarily to create some variation in the composition of these elements.

We hope this letter and its various attachments adequately responds to Council's comments and we kindly request that they be considered by the DoPI in the final assessment process, enabling an expedient approval.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact either myself or Audrey Chee on (02) 8233-9900, or alternatively Alan Crowe at Brookfield Multiplex on 0428 168 960.

Yours faithfully,



Peter Strudwick
Director

Enclosure:

- Heritage letter prepared by Stephen Davies of Urbis
- Amended plans and explanatory diagrams prepared by architects Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp.