JRPP No:	2012NTH025 – **SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT 26 FEBRUARY 2013**
DA No:	Armidale Dumaresq Council DA-219-2012
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:	***Development:*** New College for residential accommodation of 222 students at University of New England ***Address:*** Land within UNE Campus, at NW corner of Elm Avenue and Meredith Road, Armidale 60 Madgwick Drive, Armidale, NSW 2350, Lot 10 DP 1142199
APPLICANT:	Scot Brown (JBA Urban Planning Consultants Pty Ltd) on behalf of University of New England (with UNE's consent as property owner)
REPORT BY:	Stephen Gow, FPIA, Director Sustainable Planning and Living, Armidale Dumaresq Council

Further Information Request:

On Friday 22 February 2013 I was contacted by JRPP Panel Member Mr Paul McFarland about the above project and we subsequently had a telephone conversation on the morning of Monday 25 February 2013

He expressed to me some concerns about the project, as follows:

1) Wind protection/climate control for residents, as the prevailing winds are from the east and west (not as shown on the submitted site analysis plan DA 01.01 P5). He is concerned about a 'wind tunnel' effect in the winter months given the orientation of the proposed college blocks, which he distinguished from the enclosed courtyard design of the nearby existing colleges.

2) Parking. Mr McFarland indicated he was having difficulty reconciling the approach used in the Statement of Environmental Effects in relation to parking availability and specifically, based on his knowledge of UNE, that the existing car park next to the site is often full already. Also he would like the demand associated with the Wright Centre better explained, as this is often concurrent with College use, and a dedicated "overflow parking area" for its occasional use identified.

3) The traffic assessment for the project does not include any traffic generation data for the project.

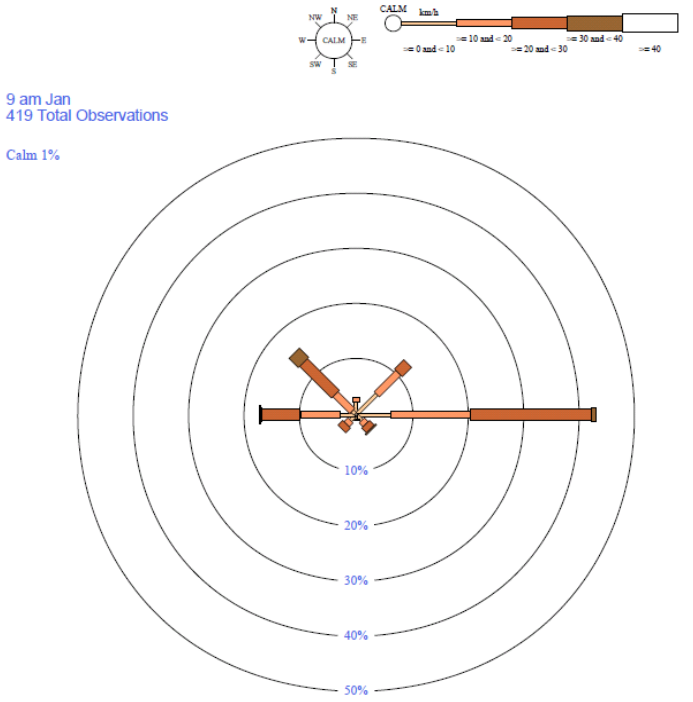
This supplementary report responds to these issues.

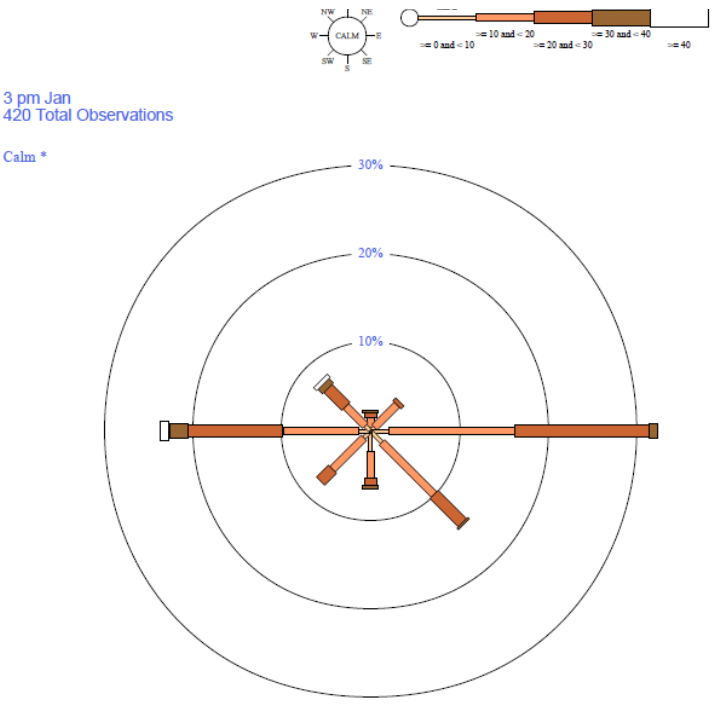
Site Analysis and Prevailing Wind Direction

The submitted site analysis plan appears to be based on magnetic north instead of true north, so that the north point should be aligned approximately 11 degrees west of the position shown.

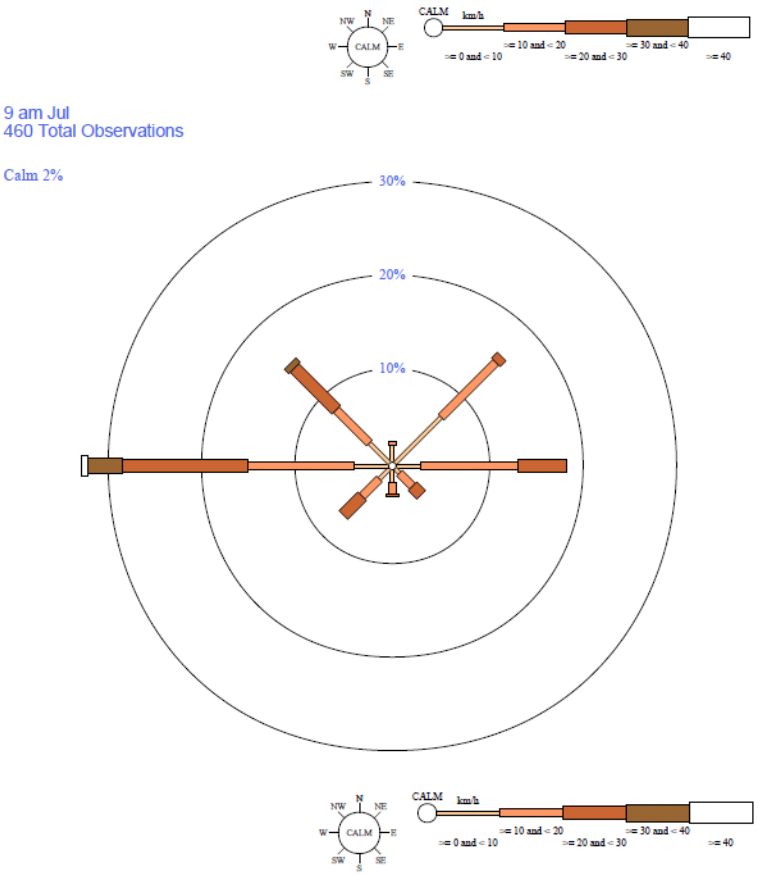
Moreover the prevailing wind direction for summer and winter in Armidale, as shown on the Bureau of Meteorology Wind Roses for Armidale Airport (January and July) are predominantly from the west and east:

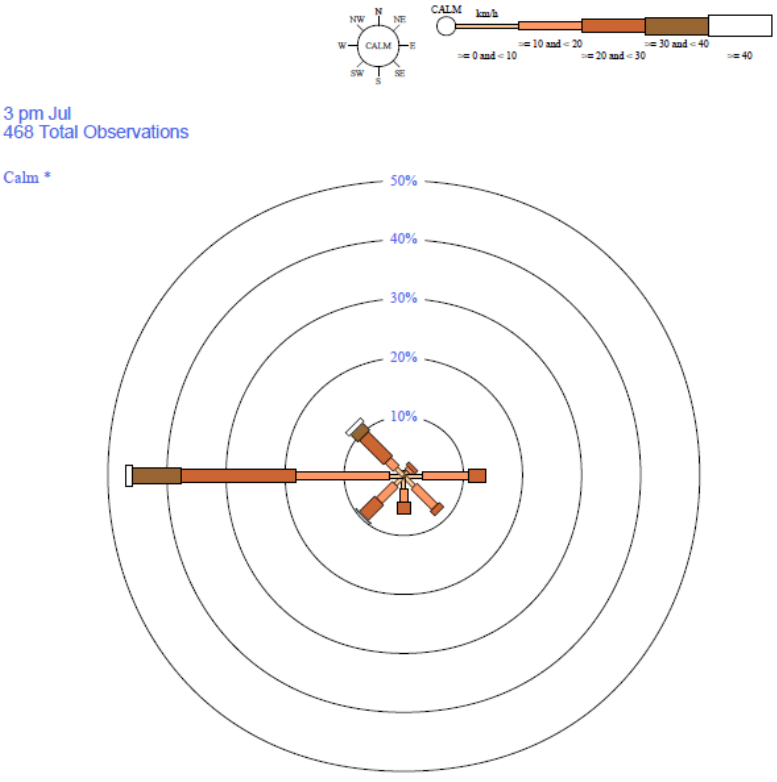
<u>January 9am and 3pm:</u>





July 9am and 3pm:





The submitted site analysis does not reflect the correct compass orientation or related wind direction, so a revised drawing has been requested from the Applicant and should be available for tomorrow's meeting. However these changes would not significantly alter the submitted design concept.

As Mr McFarland has observed, in Armidale a key consideration is to provide shelter from cold (predominantly westerly) winter winds.

In the submitted design protection from the westerly winds would be afforded to the proposed central/eastern college courtyard by the section of 'Block A' aligned approximately north / south.

However the car park and the western courtyard would be relatively exposed, although the latter may receive some shelter from the proposed plant/storage building. This area could be further protected by new shelter plantings.

The eastern courtyard in turn may also benefit from additional shelter and screen plantings as suggested on the Site Analysis Plan, although further detail is required than has been shown to date on the submitted Landscaping Plans in SEE Appendix C.

In a letter to Council dated 25 February 2013 on this issue, the Applicants have stated:

"Concern has been raised about the potential for a 'wind tunnel' effect due to the prevalence of easterly and westerly winds.

We have spoken with the Landscape Architect (Dunn and Moran) who prepared the Landscape Concept Plans for the proposed development and it has been confirmed that additional planting could take place to provide a buffer for the protection of the external spaces associated with the proposed buildings. Accordingly, if considered necessary by the Panel, we hereby confirm that UNE is happy to accept a condition of approval which requires the submission of a revised Landscape Plan to address this matter to Council's satisfaction prior to the commencement of works."

Recommendation:

Amend Condition 3 in the Appendix to the Assessment Report to require further details of screen plantings to offset prevailing wind action to the proposed college courtyard areas and car park in winter *(see over with amended text highlighted in bold).*

3. **RECOMMENDED AMENDED CONDITION**

Tree Management and Landscaping

Detailed design and construction arrangements for the project are to ensure the retention of those trees identified for retention in the submitted Demolition and Landscape Plans.

All trees proposed to be removed and retained are to be clearly identified and shown on detailed construction plans to the satisfaction of the certifying authority for the project before works commence.

All trees to be retained are to be appropriately marked and protected during construction works in accordance with AS 4970 (current edition) - Protection of trees on development sites. No buildings shall be constructed or utility service mains installed within 3 metres of the trunks of these trees, so as not to prejudice their future retention.

Any approved tree removal shall be carried out by an appropriately qualified person (e.g. tree surgeon) to avoid any risk to life or damage to property. This person shall have adequate public liability insurance cover.

All street trees are to be preserved and protected during construction work, except where removal is separately approved by Council, to ensure the continued amenity of the streetscape and to maintain public assets. Particular attention must be paid to the protection of the heritage listed Elm trees on Elm Avenue. Fencing should be erected outside the TPZ (Tree Protection Zones) to prevent vehicles parking beneath them to avoid soil compaction. No soil or building materials is to be placed within the TPZ.

New landscaping for the proposed development is to be undertaken to enhance its appearance and provide shade and environmental benefits, generally in accordance with the submitted Landscape Plans for the project, but with the inclusion of:

(i) predominantly native species, in particular new yellow box and manna gum plantings, consistent with the recommendations in the Flora and Fauna Study submitted with the application (at p.42);

(ii) dense screen plantings to protect users of the car park and courtyard areas of the project from the effects of prevailing westerly and easterly winds.

Details of the revised scheme and of arrangements for soil preparation, drainage, weed control, watering, fertilising and general maintenance during establishment are to be provided for the approval of Council's Civic Recreation Services Officer before works commence.

Approved landscaping is to be effectively maintained at all times by the college management and/or University facilities management providers.

Car Parking

Parking is considered in the SEE Part 4.6.2 and Appendix D; and in the Assessment Report at page 24/50, under Chapter B4 – Vehicle Parking Code of Council's DCP.

Key issues can be summarised as follows:

- The existing car park adjacent to the site has 61 spaces.

- Surveys undertaken of the college precinct/within 400 metres of the subject site by consultants GHD for UNE in 2010-2012 indicated a surplus of supply over student demand. 400 metres is considered an acceptable walking distance by the majority of the population, with users with disabilities requiring a shorter distance (which can be accommodated in designated reserved parking bays as required). Based on the 2012 mid-week average, this surplus was quantified in Appendix D as 45 spaces.

- Under Council's Parking Code 74 spaces are required for the New College.

- The DA proposes an additional 37 parking spaces in an extension to the existing car park to create a car park with 98 spaces adjacent to the College. This is 24 spaces additional to Council's Code requirement for the development (NB not 23 as stated on p.24/50 of the assessment report).

- However, noting that the current 'surplus' in the college precinct is given as 45 and the current car park has 61 spaces, it can be assumed that 16 of these spaces are already in demand. This leaves a notional surplus post-development of 8 spaces.

In relation to the provision of parking for the project, several factors have been considered.

Firstly, the parking in the college precinct has been considered 'englobo' or as a total supply students do not have reserved spaces, nor are they required to park in any particular car park. Most of the UNE southern college precinct is also subject to UNE's pay for parking permit system during weekday daytimes. These arrangements, together with a web based car pooling service introduced in conjunction with Student Services to facilitate ride-sharing and assist in reducing parking loads, are proposed to continue (Applicant advice and UNE Facilities Management, 25-26/2/13).

Thus although the existing car park shown on the application plans is currently in use by students of nearby colleges during term time, the assessment needs to consider the parking for this project in the context of the southern precinct of UNE as a whole.

The use of the nearby Wright Centre (the former Wright College Dining and Administration building) was also noted in the assessment report. Currently, this building is occasionally hired to external clients and is also used as an examination venue. If that use were to change, a further Development Application would be required.

Currently, it is understood that third party hire of the Centre often occurs during University holidays, so that there would be no clash with student parking demand at those times. When in use as an examination venue, many of the participants would be expected to be UNE students.

In any case given the surrounding area, there is ample space for temporary 'overflow' parking if required. The Applicants have further advised in a letter to Council dated 25 February 2013:

"During such times, special event parking areas are established on an ad hoc basis to accommodate extra demand that may be deemed necessary. This is currently managed by UNE Facilities Management and it is not intended to provide for a designated overflow parking area at this time or as part of the current proposal."

Together with that letter, which is separately **attached**, the Applicants have also provided a detailed spreadsheet of the parking surveys conducted in the area between 2010-2012. This spreadsheet, also **attached** to this report, suggests that the notional current parking surplus of 45 spaces in the college precinct used in the SEE is if anything a conservative figure – the three year average figure is over 60 spaces.

Finally, the submitted application documents indicate that the expected long term student profile for New College will be overseas students, who tend to have a lower car ownership rate. While this cannot be guaranteed, overall and as indicated in the assessment report, the proposed arrangements for parking in connection with this DA are considered acceptable to Council.

Traffic Generation

The Traffic impact of the development was considered in a Traffic Impact Assessment included as Appendix D of the SEE. Mr McFarland has expressed concern, as I understand it, that this did not include any modelling or figures for trip generation to and from the site.

The basis of the DA submission is that the New College will replace the former Wright College which had slightly higher student numbers. No objection on the basis of traffic generation was raised by Council's Engineering Director or engineering assessment officer, nor by NSW Roads and Maritime Services.

However the assessment did identify the potential for traffic calming in Meredith Road and this has been addressed in recommended Condition 4 in the Appendix to the Assessment Report.