

## ***Architect's Design Statement***

### **Middle & Senior School Development for St George Christian School**

47-69 Woids Avenue  
Allawah NSW 2218

26<sup>th</sup> April 2019

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**Project Summary**

The project proposes the construction of a new four storey classroom building over basement carpark to 47 and 49 Woids Avenue Allawah, along with substantial refurbishment and additions to the existing adjoining school campus. The new building will consist of basement carpark and plant areas, classrooms dedicated to science, art and general learning as well as areas for student toilet amenities, break out spaces and staff and administration facilities on the upper floor. This building will be connected to an existing two storey classroom to the immediate south east, which will also be extended vertically to create one larger building. These new classrooms are consistent with the NSW School Facilities Standards and will maintain BCA compliance. This will be the first of 3 stages of the campus improvement plan.

The second stage of works involves refurbishment and additions to existing classroom buildings to the south east of Stage 1. The heritage listed Chapel will have an unsympathetic addition removed, and the Chapel will become a focal point for the School reinforced by the creation of an atrium and new circulation spines that will create strong axial lines through the campus that link the secondary, middle and primary school campuses together. To the south west of the Chapel, the existing wood tech workshop will be refurbished and expanded, and student services will be upgraded. Staff office facilities will be established on the second floor of this building with a staff breakout and lounge space on the other side of the atrium, and a third level will be added to this existing building to create a student learning centre for inquiry-based learning and breakout areas for group work. In the initial application this student breakout area had been located on the upper floor of the building proposed at 47 Woids but it has been relocated to address Council and planning panel concerns on height impact to 45 Woids Avenue.

This final stage of works proposes the relocation of the primary school from a small and dated two storey demountable building into the classrooms presently used by middle school. These classrooms offer closer connection to the main library and assembly spaces. The demountable building will be refurbished to provide a BASC on ground floor level (relocated from its current position in the Chapel) and an enlarged reception. The upper floor of this building will remain as small GLA's suitable for a variety of elective subjects for middle and senior school.

It should be noted that the current school capacity for staff and students remains unchanged as part of this proposal. The purpose of the project is to provide for much improved learning environments, greater teaching and timetabling flexibility and improved amenity for students, staff and the wider community. The project significantly increases available carparking on site and also retains large open space for playground area which is currently insufficient for the school's requirements.

**NBR**SARCHITECTURE provides the following statement in reference to the State Government Educational Facilities Standards and Guidelines principles. As required by State Environmental Planning Policy (Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017, in the event of a conflict with the National Construction Code, then the National Construction Code has precedence.

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**Principle 1 – Context, Built Form and Landscape**

- The scale of the new buildings will be sympathetic with the existing Woids Avenue streetscape which is primarily comprised of two storey detached houses and three to four storey apartment blocks. The development maintains appropriate setbacks and proposes privacy screening through articulated architectural screens and landscaping that will ensure that the school usage is compatible with the neighbouring residential dwellings. The significance of the Heritage listed Chapel will be reinforced with the removal of the unsympathetic rear addition and the creation of an atrium behind the Chapel.
- Modifications to this revised development application have been made to improve the relationship of the new building at 47 Woids Avenue to the adjoining 45 Woids Avenue property and the broader streetscape in accordance with the feedback received from Council and the planning panel. Specifically this has involved an increased setback to the property at 45 Woids Avenue (now 5m instead of 3m), along with a reduction in height to this interface (predominantly 3 storeys). Increased landscaping has also been provided and existing privacy elements such as external screens retained. Significantly the proposal has also demonstrated that the height and side setback condition to 45 Woids would now be compliant with a CDC development via the Education SEPP.
- Hard and soft landscaping has been used to soften and screen new building works from the street and to develop new opportunities for outdoor learning and play. New landscaping throughout the school will create a hierarchy between spaces that will suit a variety of uses. These spaces include a more formal setting around the heritage listed Chapel to suit whole school gatherings and community gatherings, as well as defined play areas for the junior, middle and high school age groups. Activated verandas with breakout spaces and the landscaped roof terraces have also been capitalised on to provide learning areas for small group breakout and staff.
- The existing circulation through the site has been improved from both an accessibility and legibility perspective with clear formalized paths and circulation spines including accessible covered pathways throughout the campus.

**Principle 2 – Sustainable, Efficient, Durable**

- In keeping with principles of ecologically sustainable design, existing buildings have been retained, repurposed or reused wherever possible. Demolition of existing structures has been minimized to conserve energy intensive building materials.
- The new classrooms have been orientated to provide excellent natural daylight to reduce reliance on artificial lighting and in keeping with best modern learning practices.
- Shading devices, placement of verandas and window openings will enhance cross ventilation and improve thermal comfort and reduce reliance on air conditioning and mechanical ventilation.
- Orientation of new buildings for northern solar access, winter sun and summer shade, capturing breezes, connection to natural light and views from the shared breakout spaces along the verandas.
- Flexibility incorporated into design to allow for future adaptation for evolving teaching and learning practices. Structural concrete columns enables lightweight internal partitions that can be adjusted into the future. Operable walls enable GLA's to be combined between year groups or shut down to individual classes with shared access to common activity areas.
- Durable materials have been selected to ensure longevity of buildings.

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**Principle 3 – Accessible and Inclusive**

- Improvements to accessibility to existing building to raise existing buildings to current standards including addition of lifts, ramps, complying handrails, signage and accessible and ambulatory amenities throughout and accessible pathways through the site. New accessible parking bays in basement carpark.
- Inclusive of local community with improved public / private spaces to welcome parents and public for events, shared use of facilities.

**Principle 4 – Health and Safety**

- Upgrades are proposed to existing staff and student amenities, as well as to site safety and security systems. Passive surveillance of site and surrounding areas, improved legibility of pathways through the site and clear and legible public private zones.
- Improved supervision over arrivals and public / private spaces by administration and reception.
- Clear circulation / movement through site.
- Views and natural light prioritized in new buildings for better health and learning outcomes.
- Outdoor learning and play opportunities maximized for exercise and health benefits & development of healthy lifestyle habits. New shade cloth structures to provide solar protection and all-weather outdoor play spaces.

**Principle 5 – Amenity**

- Amenity is improved through re-design of “inbetween” spaces to create useful and desirable spaces for use by students, staff and visitors to the site. Circulation has been improved with establishment of new covered verandas and wide stairwells to enable quick movement of large cohorts between classes quickly and conveniently in all weather conditions.
- New teaching and learning spaces have been designed around modern learning practices for improved functionality and collaborative learning opportunities. Refurbished classroom spaces will provide improved amenity and primary school will benefit from improved classroom size.
- Teaching spaces will incorporate a range of technologically advanced teaching aids including wi-fi environment, smart boards and writable surfaces to engage all learning modes.
- Improved indoor outdoor connections and use of external areas to maximise opportunities for outdoor learning and play and allow for flexible use with teacher supervision.

**Principle 6 – Whole of Life, Flexible and Adaptive**

- Flexible design incorporating elements of lightweight internal partitions, operable walls and shared central spaces for future adaptation to changing pedagogy and teaching styles.
- Preserving and consolidating valuable outdoor play opportunities in an urban context
- Adapting and repurposing existing buildings for continued relevance and use as teaching spaces.
- Durable and low maintenance materials

**Principle 7 – Aesthetics**

- New building additions and landscape areas have been designed to be sympathetic to the existing campus. The new covered colonnade that extends along the Woids Avenue frontage will tie existing and new buildings together.
- Modified roof forms and more uniform heights (3 storey predominantly with a setback upper level in locations) will ensure a cohesive campus design that reads together and is suitable to the surrounding low to medium density residential development.

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- Removal of unsympathetic additions to the Chapel along with its refurbishment and the creation of a new atrium behind will reinforce the significance of this building within the streetscape and it's hierarchy within the school campus.
- Modulated façade elements including prodema clad breakout spaces and articulated FC and metal cladding along with new signage will provide a visually interesting form that will reflect the building's purpose as a modern learning facility.
- Decluttering and formalizing circulation zones has created a more cohesive campus feel.

Prepared by



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