

5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

The General Manager  
City of Parramatta

Attention:  
Ms Sohini Sen  
Senior development assessment officer

c/-Mayoh Architects  
Mr Peter Hinteregger  
Email: [peter.h@mayoharchitects.com.au](mailto:peter.h@mayoharchitects.com.au)

Dear Sir

**Re-Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta**  
**Your reference: DA/741/2019**

In my capacity as the heritage architect advising this project, I write to respond to three outstanding matters in the consent assessment that have been brought to the attention of council by the Sydney Central City Planning Panel.

Specifically, the Panel's issues are those raised in the *Record of Briefing* dated 14th of May 2020. The panel requires these issues to be considered and addressed.

Accordingly, the three issues and my responses are as follows:

*1. The point at which the new building links to the existing building, noting that their expectation would be that the link would be more recessive.*

I refer to Mayoh architectural drawing 100 issue P, which shows both the proposed addition and the north end of the Brigid Shelly building have identical alignments to Ross Street, and the gap between the two buildings is approximately 3 m wide and the recess approximately 1.2 m deep.

The three-dimensional character of the gap is shown in architects drawing A 800 issues C.

The architects' three-dimensional renderings demonstrate that the Brigid Shelly building remains as a freestanding building. The key image is the north western view from Ross Street.

In this view the western elevation of Brigid Shelly is visible to about 2 m at the parapet. The Brigid Shelly building has a blank western facade without openings. Therefore, a more deeply recessed link will not reveal more architectural detail or independence of the Brigid Shelly building. Rather, it would reveal blankness which would be undesirable. Furthermore, the facade of Brigid Shelly has been covered by the 1930s addition which is to be removed. Of more importance than the gap itself is the presentation of the ensemble of buildings that belong to the school on the corner

of Ross and Villiers Streets. In examining the north east view given by the architects, in my opinion the two Street facades are in good balance. If anything, if the gap could be about 300 less the New building might appear more as an extension of the Brigid Shelly building and less of an adjacent building.

*2. The proposed large balcony areas at the rear of the new building, which appear to block the cloisters of existing heritage building.*

The “cloisters” of the existing heritage building might more accurately be understood as verandah walls. In architecture, the term cloisters usually refer to structures that enclose a courtyard space, such as can be found in the convent cloister on the school site.

This might seem like a fine distinction, but the placing of balcony areas outside of the Veranda is not the same as the infilling of a cloister space. The verandah along this elevation of the Brigid Shelly building addresses open playground not enclosed space.

The character of the proposed addition to the verandah is that of an open garden structure with a pergola covering. Light structures are not only common in Australian garden landscapes generally, a very large example can be seen in the elegant vine trellis structure designed by Alexander Tzannes in his library building for this school. This proposed structure is therefore not so much new to the site as a welcome development of a theme.

Mayoh Architects have taken steps in response to earlier comments by design review panels to make more light the character of this addition. Planting boxes have been removed and a visually permeable palisade balustrade used (as submitted in April).

*3. The impact of the aforementioned large balcony areas on the existing tree, which has local value but which is required to be moved.*

The Place Design Group landscape DA report (page 4) courtyard plan shows the existing tree to be relocated not removed.

Known as the Mercy tree, this is being relocated because of its social significance to the current and arguably future generations at the school as a memorial planting.

The proposed new location is in the courtyard adjacent to the Ailsa MacKinnon Sports Centre, a location preferred by the College.

The tree is quite juvenile and has not visual impact on the public realm.

It is my hope that these comments go some way, or completely, to alleviating the concerns expressed by the panel in their review.

Yours sincerely,



Hector Abrahams  
Hector Abrahams Architects