

COUNCIL ASSESSMENT REPORT
SYDNEY EASTERN CITY PLANNING PANEL

PANEL REFERENCE & DA NUMBER	PPSSEC-372 – DA2025/48
PROPOSAL	Demolition of existing at grade carpark, tree removal and construction of a 3-storey education and research building, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Centre of Education Excellence, waste storage enclosure and associate landscaping and business identification signage. Pursuant to Section 4.46 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, the proposed development is defined as Integrated Development and requires the consent of Heritage Council NSW under the Heritage Act 1977.
ADDRESS	179 Albert Road, Strathfield Lot 11 DP 869042
APPLICANT	Mr. M Tracey
OWNER	The Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Archdiocese of Sydney
DA LODGEMENT DATE	4 April 2025
APPLICATION TYPE	Integrated Development and Crown DA
REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT CRITERIA	Section 2.19(1) and Clause 4 of Schedule 6 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021 declares the proposal regionally significant development as: the development has a cost of works greater than \$5m.
CIV	\$33,843,030.00 (excluding GST)
CLAUSE 4.6 REQUESTS	NIL
KEY SEPP/LEP	<i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021</i> • <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021</i> • <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and</i>

	<i>Infrastructure) 2021</i> • <i>Strathfield Local Environmental Plan 2012.</i> • <i>Strathfield Development Control plan 2005 - Part M (Education Establishments)</i>
TOTAL & UNIQUE SUBMISSIONS KEY ISSUES IN SUBMISSIONS	One (1)
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION	Full set of architectural plans, SEE, Arborist Report, Development Compliance with Concept Plan, Architectural Report, Arborist Report, Landscape Plans, Heritage Impact Assessment, Civil Plans, Landscape Heritage Impact Assessment Report, Embodied Emissions Report, Acoustic and Vibration Assessment, Geotechnical Investigations Report, Detailed Site Investigation Report, Remediation Action Plan, Site Survey, Operational Plan of Management Traffic and Access Impact Report, Operational Waste Management Plan, Ecologically Sustainable Development Report
RECOMMENDATION	Approval, subject to conditions of consent.
DRAFT CONDITIONS TO APPLICANT	Yes – Approval received on 10 November 2025
SCHEDULED MEETING DATE	20 November 2025
PREPARED BY	Apoorva Chikkerur - Executive Planner
DATE OF REPORT	12 November 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposal

The development application (DA2025/48) seeks consent for the demolition of existing at-grade carpark, tree removal and construction of a 3-storey education and research building, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Centre of Education Excellence, waste storage enclosure and associate landscaping and business identification signage.

Pursuant to Section 4.46 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, the proposed development is defined as Integrated Development and requires the consent of Heritage Council NSW under the Heritage Act 1977.

Site and Locality

The site is located within the ACU Mount Saint Mary Campus (Strathfield Campus) at 179 Albert Road, Strathfield (Lot 11 DP 869042). The site is also known as 25A Barker Road, Strathfield.

The site adjoins Barker Road to the south and Albert Road to the north-east and is located approximately 1.5km west of Strathfield Station.

The site has an area of approximately 4,800sqm within the south-eastern corner of the campus (subject site). The site is relatively flat with a crossfall of approximately 3 metres from east to west over a 100m distance (3% fall). A portion of the site 32.6m long by 1.5m wide, within the north-eastern corner, is subject to an easement which restricts the use of the land. The terms of the restriction are for the protection and maintenance of a stormwater detention facility. This easement accommodates a stormwater tank located under the eastern-most row of car parking spaces with three surface access pits.

The ACU Strathfield Campus contains two listed heritage items:

- 'Mount St. Mary Campus of the Australian Catholic University', an item of State significance (No. 01965); and
- 'Australian Catholic University, Strathfield Campus (includes former "Mount Royal")—various buildings and landscape', an item of local heritage significance (I92).

Zoning and Permissibility

The site is zoned SP2 – Infrastructure (Educational Establishment) zone. The site adjoins land zoned R2 Low Density Residential.

Consideration for the SP2 Infrastructure land use objectives is provided in **table** below. It demonstrates that the development is consistent with the applicable land use zone objectives.

SP2 Infrastructure zone objectives Comment

Objective

<i>To provide for infrastructure and related uses.</i>	The proposal seeks to provide education infrastructure and related uses.
<i>To prevent development that is not compatible with or that may detract from the provision of infrastructure.</i>	The proposal does not compete with or detract from the provision of infrastructure.
<i>To ensure that development does not have an adverse effect on adjoining land.</i>	The proposed development complements the existing land uses on site and adjacent sites.

Concurrence Requirements

The application is an integrated development pursuant to Section 4.46 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* ('EP&A Act'). A referral to Heritage NSW pursuant Section 4.47 of the EP&A Act, was sent and no objections were raised. General terms of approval were provided and has been included in the consent.

The application was also referred to AUSGRID under Section 2.48 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021*. AUSGRID has provided their letter of consent and has been included in the consent.

Public Notification and Submissions

The application was placed on public exhibition from 11 April to 14 May 2025 and one (1) submission was received. The submission raised issues with potential traffic congestion and access points, potential alternative methods of transport. These issues are considered further in this report.

Panel Briefing – Key Issues and Solutions

The application is referred to the Sydney East Planning Panel ('the Panel') as the development is '*regionally significant development*', pursuant to Section 2.19(1) and Clause (5)(b) of Schedule 6 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021* as the proposal is development for *educational establishment* with a CIV over \$5 million.

A briefing was held with the Panel on 24 July 2025 where the following key issues were discussed:

- Site location and surrounding development outlined
- Proposed development identified as alterations and additions to an existing tertiary education establishment, being the construction of a STEM Centre, associated works and removal of 11 trees.
- A Pre-DA held with Council noting heritage, stormwater, urban design, traffic and environmental health and trees concerns.
- Concept approval granted in 2015, with modification application currently with the department.
- Request for information sent on
 - Tree retention and impact of proposed works
 - Submission of a detailed site investigation report.
- Impact on State heritage item – response from Heritage NSW outstanding
- Existing car parking is considered adequate for the development
- 1 submission received, noting suggestion for implementation of minibuses for students
- External Referrals
 - Heritage NSW and Ausgrid – to be resolved
- Internal Referrals:
 - Engineering, Health, Waste, Heritage – to be resolved
 - Traffic – conditions provided.

Panel comments provided:

- Recommendation for heritage consultant rather than urban design consultant, subject to comments from Heritage NSW.
- Detailed Site Investigation report with ground water sampling required
- Consistency with concept approval to be assessed.

Following the Panel briefing the above key issues have been resolved as:

- All internal and external referrals have been received with no outstanding issues. Relevant conditions are included in the consent outlined in Attachment A.
- A detailed site investigation report and remediation action plan was submitted and supported by Council's Environmental Health Officer subject to conditions of consent.
- Modification 1 (MP10_0231-Mod-1) was approved on 19 August 2025.

Following a detailed assessment of the proposal, pursuant to Section 4.16(1)(b) of the *EP&A Act*, DA2025/48 is recommended for approval subject to conditions of consent contained at Attachment A of this report.

1. THE SITE AND LOCALITY

1.1 The Site

The site is located within the ACU Mount Saint Mary Campus (Strathfield Campus) at 179 Albert Road, Strathfield (Lot 11 DP 869042). The site is also known as 25A Barker Road, Strathfield.

The site adjoins Barker Road to the south and Albert Road to the north-east and is located approximately 1.5km west of Strathfield Station.

The site has an area of approximately 4,800sqm within the south-eastern corner of the campus (subject site). The site is relatively flat with a crossfall of approximately 3 metres from east to west over a 100m distance (3% fall). A portion of the site 32.6m long by 1.5m wide, within the north-eastern corner, is subject to an easement which restricts the use of the land. The terms of the restriction are for the protection and maintenance of a stormwater detention facility. This easement accommodates a stormwater tank located under the eastern-most row of car parking spaces with three surface access pits.

The ACU Strathfield Campus contains two listed heritage items:

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1.2 The Locality

The site is located within an area consisting of a mix of different land uses, including low and medium density housing, schools, aged care facilities, places of public worship and public open space.

The site is located approximately 2km from Strathfield Station and is well serviced by existing pedestrian/cycling, road and public transport infrastructure.

2. THE PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Proposal

The proposed development seeks alterations and additions to an existing tertiary education establishment, namely construction of a STEM Centre of Education Excellence at ACU Strathfield and associated works. Key features of the proposed development include:

Tree Removal

- 4 x trees proposed for removal

Tree Transplanting

- 6 x trees proposed for transplanting

Demolition

- Demolition is proposed to remove the 103 space at-grade sealed car park, footpaths, Campus Drive surface, light poles and associated utility infrastructure

Built form

- The STEM Centre will comprise a three-storey rectangular building with basement. The building will be located parallel to Campus Drive with its main entry on this northern façade.
- Materials selected for the façade comprise a mix of sheet cladding, smooth and textured concrete, and glazing with painted metal mesh, louvres and fins. The tones selected are cool and pale with green and grey tones.

Landscaping

- Planting of 16 new native trees to extend the existing canopy for improved amenity, aesthetics and biodiversity.

Utility connections and services

- A new kiosk substation is proposed within the site adjacent to Barker Road. The substation will occupy a space 5.3m by 3.3m.
- Connection to Sydney Water infrastructure for potable water and sewer is proposed as specified by ADP Consultant in the Infrastructure Servicing Report.
- To cater for the food technology classrooms, a new grease arrestor and a trade waste agreement with Sydney Water will be required.
- A fire booster including hydrant connection point is proposed in the southwestern corner of the site adjacent to the Barker Road driveway access.

Signage

- Signage is proposed in the upper left corner of the western façade comprising the University emblem and name. This signage will be laser cut back lit metal pieces affixed to the façade. The signage will occupy a space approximately 7m x 4m.

Proposed use

The facility will cater for three key cohorts:

- Teaching & Learning Cohort – ACU students and staff engaged in STEM education and research.

- Training Centre Cohort – Industry partners addressing capability gaps and workforce development.
- Community Cohort – Engagement programs, including outreach initiatives to foster STEM interest in the broader community. These programs will be available to schools, community groups or members of the public through a bookings system, and access to all spaces will be provided subject to availability and relevant ACU policies (e.g. WHS). This includes the sand and water play space and technical labs.

Hours of Operation

- The STEM Centre provides for public access into the discovery centre and gallery spaces during business hours as well as landscaped areas to invite local residents and visitors to explore and engage with the STEM Centre.
- Public access to teaching and research spaces will be restricted behind secure lines but opportunities for visual connection will be maximised
 - o Monday – Friday: 7.00am to 10.00pm
 - o Weekends and public holidays: 8.30am to 5.00pm
- Students and staff are not permitted on the site prior to 7.00am or after 10.00pm.
- No classes are permitted to commence prior to 8.00am or finish later than 8.00pm.
- Use of the library is permitted during the above hours.
- Events and activities
- The centre will host a variety of events, including lectures, workshops, research symposiums, industry training programs, and community outreach initiatives.
- If an event is proposed to be held on the Campus on a weekend or public holiday, on an occasional basis, for educational or ecclesiastical purposes, and the event will generate a greater Campus population than the number of available on-site car parking spaces, ACU will:
 - Only allow a maximum of six such events per year;
 - Notify Council no later than 14 days prior to the event;
 - Inform the community of these events, by a letterbox drop to all mail boxes within 400m radius of the STEM Centre; and inform the community by a notice on the Campus website homepage, no later than 14 days prior to the event, for a period of 14 days.

Complaints handling

The Operational Plan of Management sets out the approach to dealing with any complaints if received in relation to the use and management of the proposed STEM Centre. This process involves availability to submit complaints, acknowledgement, investigation, resolutions and response, escalation process and registration, review and continuous improvement.

Security

Site security measures include 24/7 surveillance, keyboard access control, and on-site security personnel. Further detail is provided in the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) review contained with the Architectural Report and the Operational Plan of Management.

Waste Management

- An Operation Waste Management Plan has been prepared by Waste Audit.

- Four waste streams are proposed: general waste, paper/card, commingled recycling and organics.
- All waste streams will be collected through the building, transported by the lift and loading bay to waste storage areas in the basement and in an external enclosure and collected from site three times per week.

Table 1: Development Data

Control	Proposal
Site area	5,800sqm
GFA	2476.9sqm
Max Height	18m (three storeys)
Setbacks	15m from Barker Road, 25m from Mt Royal Reserve frontages and 45m from the nearest residences.
Car Parking spaces	Loss of 103 on-site parking spaces with the closure of P1 Car park. 476 car parking spaces retained for the anticipated 430 persons that would be expected to drive to Campus at its peak permissible occupation.

2.2 Background

A pre-lodgement meeting was held prior to the lodgement of the applicant on 13 March 2025 where various issues were discussed. A summary of the key issues and how they have been addressed by the proposal is outlined below:

- Stormwater – No stormwater plans were included as part of the PRE-da package.
- Traffic – Required a Traffic Impact Report to consider the removal of over 100 car parking spaces.
- Environmental Health – A detailed site investigation report was required to be submitted.
- Trees – Consideration to be given to retaining as many trees as possible.

The development application was lodged on **4 April 2025**. A chronology of the development application since lodgement is outlined below including the Panel's involvement (briefings, deferrals etc) with the application:

Table 2: Chronology of the DA

Date	Event
April 2025	Subject application was lodged with Council.
11 April 2025	Exhibition of the application till the 14 May 2025 in accordance with Council's Community Participation Plan.
3 June 2025	DA referred to Heritage NSW.

18 June 2025	Request for Information from Council to applicant sent. Applicant has requested a 20-day extension until 8 August 2025 to submit the additional information.
24 July 2025	Panel briefing
13 August 2025	Additional information submitted and re-referrals sent to relevant technical specialists.
2 September 2025	Landscape matters remained unresolved, specifically relating to the retention of Tree 58 and Tree 61.
22 September 2025	A meeting was held with the applicant's team to resolve the retention of Tree 58 and Tree 61. It was agreed that Tree 58 could be retained with minor re-design which could be conditioned prior to the issue of the construction certificate. Tree 61 could not be retained due to its proximity to the substation.
29 September 2025	A letter was received from the applicant summarising the agreed matters from the meeting held on the 22 September with proposed wording for the retention of Tree 58. This was referred to Council's Urban Forest Supervisor for final comments and conditions.
10 October 2025	Draft conditions of consent were sent to the applicant for review.
22 October 2025	Referral raised with AUSGRID under Section 2.48(1) (a) of the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP 2021
5 November 2025	Received AUSGRID letter of consent
10 November 2025	Draft conditions of consent were accepted by the applicant.

2.3 Site History

Table 3: Site History

Date	Event
27 March 2025	A Pre-DA was held with Council with issues raised regarding heritage, stormwater, urban design, traffic, environmental health and trees.
18 June 2015	MP 10_0231 - The Concept Plan approval was issued by the former Planning Assessment Commission (PAC), as delegate of the then Minister for Planning under the now repealed Part 3A of the EP&A Act in accordance with the Court orders. The Concept Plan approved upgrade to the Strathfield Campus as follows:

	• A maximum of 2,200 people on the Campus at any one time. • Increase in hours and days of operation. • Six new building envelopes to a maximum height of four storeys. • Total on-site car parking for 747 vehicles: 717 to be used by the ACU; and 30 to be used by St Patrick's College, Strathfield. • Road works to support the development. • Pedestrian linkages and landscaping throughout the site; and Staging of the development in four stages.
19 August 2025	The Director, Social Infrastructure Assessments, approved the Australian Catholic University Concept Modification 1 (MP10_0231-Mod-1) modification application under Section 75W of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> .

3. STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Division 4.3 – Development that needs consent (Except complying development)

When determining a development application, the consent authority must take into consideration the matters outlined in Section 4.15(1) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* ('EP&A Act'). These matters as are of relevance to the development application include the following:

- (a) *the provisions of any environmental planning instrument, proposed instrument, development control plan, planning agreement and the regulations*
 - (i) *any environmental planning instrument, and*
 - (ii) *any proposed instrument that is or has been the subject of public consultation under this Act and that has been notified to the consent authority (unless the Planning Secretary has notified the consent authority that the making of the proposed instrument has been deferred indefinitely or has not been approved), and*
 - (iii) *any development control plan, and*
 - (iiia) *any planning agreement that has been entered into under section 7.4, or any draft planning agreement that a developer has offered to enter into under section 7.4, and*
 - (iv) *the regulations (to the extent that they prescribe matters for the purposes of this paragraph),*
- (b) *that apply to the land to which the development application relates,*
- (b) *the likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality,*
- (c) *the suitability of the site for the development,*

- (d) *any submissions made in accordance with this Act or the regulations,*
- (e) *the public interest.*

Division 4.6 - Crown Development

The applicant is ACU and therefore the DA is classified as a Crown DA under Section 4.32 of the EP&A Act. Section 4.33 of the EP&A Act sets out matters to be considered by consent authorities in the determining or imposition of a condition upon a Crown Development. The conditions of consent were reviewed by the applicant and agreed to by the applicant on 11 November 2025.

Division 4.8 - Integrated Development

Under Section 4.46 of this division, development that requires approval in respect of the doing or carrying out of an act, matter or thing referred to in Section 57 (1) of the *Heritage Act 1977* constitutes integrated development.

As this proposal involves alterations and additions to a heritage item listed under the *Heritage Act 1977*, the proposal will require approval from the Heritage Council of NSW (Heritage Council) and is considered integrated development.

On 21 June 2025, Heritage Council considered the above integrated development application and in accordance with Section 4.47 of the EPA Act, granted general terms of approval which are included in the conditions of consent.

Heritage Act 1977

The *Heritage Act 1977* identifies items of State heritage significance and promotes the adaptive reuse and conservation of these items.

Mount St Mary Campus of the Australian Catholic University is listed as an item of State heritage significance on the NSW State Heritage Register.

Under Division 3 Part 4 of the *Heritage Act 1977*, the proposal cannot be undertaken without the approval of Heritage NSW. On 21 June 2025, Heritage Council considered the above integrated development application and in accordance with Section 4.47 of the EPA Act, granted general terms of approval which are included in the conditions of consent.

3.1 Environmental Planning Instruments, proposed instrument, development control plan, planning agreement and the regulations

The relevant environmental planning instruments, proposed instruments, development control plans, planning agreements and the matters for consideration under the Regulation are considered below.

(a) Section 4.15(1)(a)(i) - Provisions of Environmental Planning Instruments

The following Environmental Planning Instruments are relevant to this application:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Sustainable Buildings) 2021
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021
- Strathfield Local Environmental Plan 2012.

A summary of the key matters for consideration arising from these State Environmental Planning Policies, Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan are outlined in **Table 3** and considered in more detail in **Attachment 3**.

Table 3: Summary of Applicable Environmental Planning Instruments

EPI	Matters for Consideration	Comply (Y/N)
State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity & Conservation) 2021	Chapter 2: Vegetation in non-rural areas A total of 10 trees is proposed for removal. A total 16 new (native) trees are proposed to be planted on site. Chapter 6 Water Catchments applies to the site as it is located within, the Sydney Harbour Catchment.	Y
State Environmental Planning Policy (Sustainable Buildings) 2021	Chapter 3 of the SEPP applies to the development as non-residential development involving the erection of a new building with an estimated development cost greater than \$5 million.	Y
State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021	Chapter 3: Advertising and Signage • Section 3.6 – granting consent to signage • Section 3.11(1) – matters for consideration	Y
State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021	As the development will be carried out by or on behalf of the Crown and the EDC is greater than \$5 million and less than \$50 million, the development meets the definition of regionally significant development under Schedule 6 of the Planning Systems SEPP and the consent authority for the DA will be the Sydney Eastern City Planning Panel.	Y
SEPP (Resilience & Hazards) 2021	Chapter 4: Remediation of Land • Section 4.6 - Contamination and remediation have been considered in the Contamination Report and the proposal is satisfactory subject to conditions.	Y
SEPP (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021	Chapter 2 – Infrastructure Division 5 – Electricity transmission or distribution Section 2.48 (1) (a) the penetration of ground within 2m of an underground electricity power line or an electricity distribution pole or within 10m of any part of an electricity tower	Y
Proposed Instruments	No compliance issues identified.	Yes

Strathfield Environmental Plan 2012	Local Plan	• Clause 2.3 – Permissibility and zone objectives • Clause 2.7 – Demolition requires development consent • Clause 5.10 – Heritage Conservation • Clause 6.6 – Erection or display of signage	Y
Strathfield Consolidated Development Control Plan	Control Plan	Part M – Educational Establishments Part P – Heritage Part H – Waste Management Part M – Water Sensitive Urban Design and Part Q – Urban Design	Y

(b) Section 4.15(1)(a)(iii) - Provisions of any Development Control Plan

The following contributions plans are relevant pursuant to Section 7.18 of the EP&A Act and have been considered in the recommended conditions (notwithstanding Contributions plans are not DCPs they are required to be considered):

- *Indirect Development Contributions Plan 2010*

Under Section 7.12 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 indirect development contributions can be levied on particular development. Schedule 1 outlines the development that will be levied indirect development contributions.

Schedule 1 – Summary of Levy by Category

Type of Development	Levy (%)
All development not subject to Direct Development Contributions with a cost of development between \$100,001 to \$200,000	0.5%
All development not subject to Direct Development Contributions with a cost of development more than \$200,000	1.0%

As the cost of development is \$33,843,030.00 the total contributions payable is **\$338,430.30**. This has been imposed in Condition 4 of the consent.

3.2 Section 4.15(1)(b) - Likely Impacts of Development

The likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality must be considered. In this regard, potential impacts related to the proposal have been considered in response to SEPPs, LEP and DCP controls outlined above and the Key Issues section below.

The consideration of impacts on the natural and built environments includes the following:

- Context and setting – The new building includes a diversity of modern STEM spaces such as workshops, collaboration, lab, and exhibition spaces. Significant vegetation is

retained where possible to maintain a mature vegetated buffer to adjacent residences. Nominal trees are proposed for removal to enable delivery access. The building sits comfortably within a landscaped university Campus and respects the heritage significance and surrounding low density residential neighbourhood with large established trees and high amenity.

The proposed building envelope is generally consistent with the Concept Plan, as modified which has been assessed under Section 75W of the EP&A Act and found to be acceptable.

The building presents a strong interface with Campus Drive behind the retained avenue of trees. It will create a strong sense of arrival from Albert Road and retain the view up Campus Drive to the State-heritage listed Edmund Rice Building.

- Access and traffic – The Concept Plan, as modified will facilitate an increase of the maximum Campus population to 1,000 persons at any given Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) once the STEM building is operational. Three modes of transport are anticipated: car parking, service vehicles and active transport. The submitted Traffic Impact Assessment Report concludes that the proposed development can be successfully integrated into the existing Campus operations without causing significant adverse impacts on traffic, parking, or accessibility.
- Utilities – Section 2.48 of the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP the consent authority is required to give written notice to the electricity supply authority for the area and take into consideration any response to that notice before granting consent to a development likely to affect an electrical transmission or distribution network. The application was referred to AUSGRID, and a letter of consent has been provided and included under Condition 10 of the consent.

Ground penetration works are proposed within 2m of an underground electricity power line. Accordingly, the proposed development will require referral to Ausgrid for consideration by the consent authority.

- Heritage – The proposal contains a local heritage item. A referral was sent to Heritage NSW who supported the proposal with the general terms of approval which have been included in the conditions of consent.
- Natural environment – The design has considered the existing strong tree patterns across various areas of the site. Boundary planting will be retained and supplemented to screen the STEM Centre from sensitive neighbouring uses and retain the established neighbourhood character. The heritage significant avenue of trees is retained and better utilised with the primary footpath and passive gathering spaces running parallel to its canopy, becoming a stronger focal point of activity within the Campus.

The proposed landscaping results in a net increase in the number of trees and canopy cover across the site. Evergreen native species have been selected for their shade properties, ability to come along with existing species and reflect values of Country.

- Noise and vibration – An Acoustic and Vibration Report has been prepared by ADP Consulting to assess noise and vibration emissions from construction activities to

surrounding noise-sensitive receivers, assess noise emissions from the STEM Centre during proposed operations, and assess noise intrusion into the proposed STEM Centre from environmental noise sources to inform the STEM design.

Noise criteria were established for mechanical plant and equipment noise emissions. A detailed assessment of mechanical plant noise should be conducted at the detailed design stage. However, ADP Consulting find that there is sufficient scope within the building design for compliance to be achieved.

The assessment concluded that the proposed development could satisfy the relevant noise standards policies and guidelines.

Relevant conditions are included in the consent to ensure compliance.

- Social and economic impact – The Department of Education (Commonwealth) recognises the need to change the national skillset to meet emerging employment demands. STEM education can support students to understand the realities and needs of the STEM workforce and prepare for the substantial career challenges and opportunities ahead.

The National STEM School Education Strategy 2016–2026 was agreed by all education ministers in December 2015 through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council. The national strategy supports a long-term change agenda aiming to ensure that students have a stronger foundation in STEM and are inspired to take on more challenging STEM subjects.

To meet this growing demand, ACU has proposed to establish a leading STEM Centre of Education Excellence at its Strathfield Campus. The innovative purpose-built centre will provide a suite of educational opportunities to boost in-demand STEM skills among students of all ages, community groups, residents, and a wide range of industries in Strathfield and Western Sydney. The facility will host school programs and short courses to provide more opportunities for the local community to study STEM subjects.

In the immediate term, the proposal is estimated to generate 118 full time equivalent construction jobs. During its operational phase, it is anticipated that the STEM Centre will be occupied by existing staff and students in addition to visitors and approximately six additional permanent staff.

The social and economic impacts associated with the proposed development are considered positive.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal will not result in any significant adverse impacts in the locality as outlined above.

3.3 Section 4.15(1)(c) - Suitability of the site

The relevant matters pertaining to the suitability of the site for the proposed development have been considered in the in this report. The site is suitable for this development given:

- It is an appropriate “fit” for the locality given the preceding analysis which demonstrates a lack of adverse built form and operational impacts; and

- The site attributes are conducive noting natural constraints/hazards; ecological and heritage impacts are able to be properly managed.

3.4 Section 4.15(1)(d) - Public Submissions

These submissions are considered in Section 5 of this report.

3.5 Section 4.15(1)(e) - Public interest

Subject to resolution of the issues of concern as addressed by the recommendation of this report, no circumstances have been identified to indicate this proposal would be contrary to the public interest.

4. REFERRALS AND SUBMISSIONS

4.1 Agency Referrals and Concurrence

The development application has been referred to the below agency for concurrence as required by the EP&A Act and outlined below in Table 5.

Table 4: Concurrence and Referrals to agencies

Agency	Concurrence/ referral trigger	Comments (Issue, resolution, conditions)	Resolved
Referral/Consultation Agencies			
AUSGRID	Under Chapter 2 Division 5 – Section 2.48(1) (a) for any DAs including the penetration of ground within 2m of an underground electricity power line or an electricity distribution pole or within 10m of any part of an electricity tower cannot be undertaken without the approval of electricity supply authority of the area.	A new kiosk substation is proposed within the site adjacent to Barker Road. The substation will occupy a space 5.3m by 3.3m. A referral was raised with AUSGRID who have provided their letter of consent. (See Appendix A for draft conditions of consent)	Y
Integrated Development (S 4.46 of the EP&A Act)			
Heritage NSW	Under Division 3 Part 4 of the <i>Heritage Act 1977</i> , the proposal cannot be undertaken without the approval of Heritage NSW.	On 21 June 2025, Heritage Council considered the above integrated development application and in accordance with Section 4.47 of the EPA Act, granted general terms of approval which are included in the conditions of consent. (See Appendix A for draft conditions of consent)	Y

4.2 Council Officer Referrals

The development application has been referred to various Council officers for technical review as outlined **Table 5**.

Table 5: Consideration of Council Referrals

Officer	Comments	Resolved
Engineering	Council's Engineering Officer reviewed the submitted stormwater concept plan and considered that there were no objections subject to conditions.	Y
Traffic	Council's Traffic Engineering Officer reviewed the proposal and considered that there were no objections subject to conditions.	Y
Building	Council's Building Officer reviewed the proposal and considered that there were no objections subject to conditions.	Y
Health	Council's Environmental Health Officer reviewed the submitted detailed site investigation report and remediation action plan and considered that there were no objections subject to conditions.	Y
Waste	Council's Engineering Officer reviewed the submitted waste management plan and considered that there were no objections subject to conditions.	Y
Landscape	Council's Engineering Officer reviewed the submitted landscape plan and Arborist Report and considered that there were no objections subject to conditions.	Y

4.3 Community Consultation

The proposal was notified in accordance with the Council's Community Participation Plan from 11 April 2025 until 14 May 2025

The notification included the following:

- An advertisement in the local newspaper
- A sign placed on the site.
- Notification on a website.
- Notification letters sent to adjoining and adjacent properties
- Notification on the Council's website.

The Council received a total of one (1) unique submission. The issues raised in the submission is considered in **Table 6** below:

Table 6: Community Submissions

Issue	Council Comments
Traffic Management	Council's traffic engineer has assessed the application and has found it to be satisfactory. The parking requirements for the number of students/staff anticipated for the STEM centre can adequately be accommodated within the existing car parking spaces.

5. KEY ISSUES

The following key issue is relevant to the assessment of this application having considered the relevant planning controls and the proposal in detail:

5.1 Tree Removal

The original submitted plans showed the removal of 5 trees including Tree 58 and Tree 61. Council's Urban Forest Supervisor did not support the removal and requested further solutions be explored to try and retain Tree 58 and Tree 61.

Resolution: The issue was resolved through a meeting held on 22 September 2025 with the Applicant's team. Both parties were able to reach an agreement to retain Tree 58 through a minor re-design of the entryway and it was agreed by Council that the removal of Tree 61 was inevitable due to the location of the substation restricting the design of the pathway. A suitable condition (Condition 14) has been included to ensure that Tree 58 is retained.

6. CONCLUSION

This development application has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the EP&A Act and the Regulations as outlined in this report. Following a thorough assessment of the relevant planning controls, issues raised in submissions and the key issues identified in this report, it is considered that the application can be supported.

It is considered that the key issues as outlined in Section 5 have been resolved satisfactorily in the recommended draft conditions at **Attachment A**.

7. RECOMMENDATION

That the Development Application DA2025/48 for demolition of existing at grade carpark, tree removal and construction of a 3-storey education and research building, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Centre of Education Excellence, waste storage enclosure and associate landscaping and business identification signage. Pursuant to Section 4.46 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, the proposed development is defined as Integrated Development and requires the consent of Heritage Council NSW under the Heritage Act 1977 at 179 Albert Road and 25A Barker Street be **APPROVED** pursuant to Section 4.16(1)(a) or (b) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* subject to the draft conditions of consent attached to this report at Attachment A.

The following attachments are provided:

- Attachment A: Draft Conditions of consent
- Attachment B: Approval from the Crown (applicant) for imposition of Conditions
- Attachment C: Tables of Compliance
- Attachment D: Architectural Plans