COUNCIL ASSESSMENT BRIEFING REPORT TO PANEL

SYDNEY NORTH PLANNING PANEL

PANEL REFERENCE & DA NUMBER	PPSSNH-552 & LDA2024/0231
PROPOSAL	Construction of a new purpose-built facility for Macquarie University Central Animal Facility (inclusive of a new Zebrafish Facility) and associated landscaping.
ADDRESS	Lot 2000 in DP 1305792- 192 Balaclava Road, Macquarie Park
APPLICANT	Mario Pellicane
OWNER	Macquarie University
DA LODGEMENT DATE	12 November 2024
APPLICATION TYPE	CROWN DA
REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT CRITERIA	Clause 2, Schedule 6 of the Planning Systems SEPP: General development over $30 million
CIV	$33,324,348.00 (excluding GST)
CLAUSE 4.6 REQUESTS	No
LIST OF ALL RELEVANT PLANNING CONTROLS (S4.15(1)(A) OF EP&A ACT)	• *State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021* • *State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021* • *State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021* • *State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021* • *State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021* • *State Environmental Planning Policy (Sustainable Buildings) 2022* • *Ryde Local Environmental Plan 2014;*
AGENCY REFERRALS	None
TOTAL & UNIQUE SUBMISSIONS	No submissions have been received.
KEY ISSUES	Refer to Council's request for information (RFI) letter (Appendix 1)

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION	Architectural Plans & Design Report, Landscape Plan, Stormwater Management Plan, Statement of Environmental Effects, Biodiversity Assessment, Traffic Impact Assessment, Access Review, Operational Management Plan, Utilities and Building Services Report, Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan, BCA Assessment Report, Resilience and Hazards Report, Aboriginal Impact Assessment Report, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Operational Waste Management Plan, and Hydraulic and Fire Services Report.
PREVIOUS BRIEFINGS	N/A
PLAN VERSION	25 October 2024
ASSESSMENT STATUS	Waiting for applicant response on Council's RFI letter
PREPARED BY	Mahbub Alam
DATE OF REPORT	5 February 2025

1. THE SITE AND LOCALITY

1.1 The Site

The subject is legally described as Lot 2000 in DP 1305792 at 192 Balaclava Road, Macquarie Park. The site is under the ownership of Macquarie University and currently accommodates a demountable building and two storage containers. The site is located at the corner of Science Road and Research Park Drive, and forms part of a collection of smaller buildings within the University's Science and Medicine Precinct. The site's primary street frontage (to Science Road) is dominated by a stand of mature eucalyptus trees.

Figure 1 Site context map

Source: Nearmap, Ethos Urban

Figure 2 Aerial photo of the development site

Source: Nearmap, Ethos Urban

Existing demountable to be relocated

View looking towards the site from the adjacent carpark to the site's west

Figure 3 Photos of existing buildings

Source: BLP

1.2 The Locality

The site is surrounded by various Macquarie University infrastructure and built elements associated with different functions of the University. The site is located within the eastern portion of the University campus, only an approximately 400m walk from the Macquarie University Metro Station located in the southern portion of the campus. Uses surrounding the campus include residential, aged care, retail and residential uses. Within the campus, the site is north of the Mechanical Engineering and Technical Services building (also referred to as

Building 3), east of Carpark E5, south of the existing Central Animal Facility and west of the Department of Science and Engineering (also referred to as Building 13). The site's southern boundary has a partial frontage to Science Road.

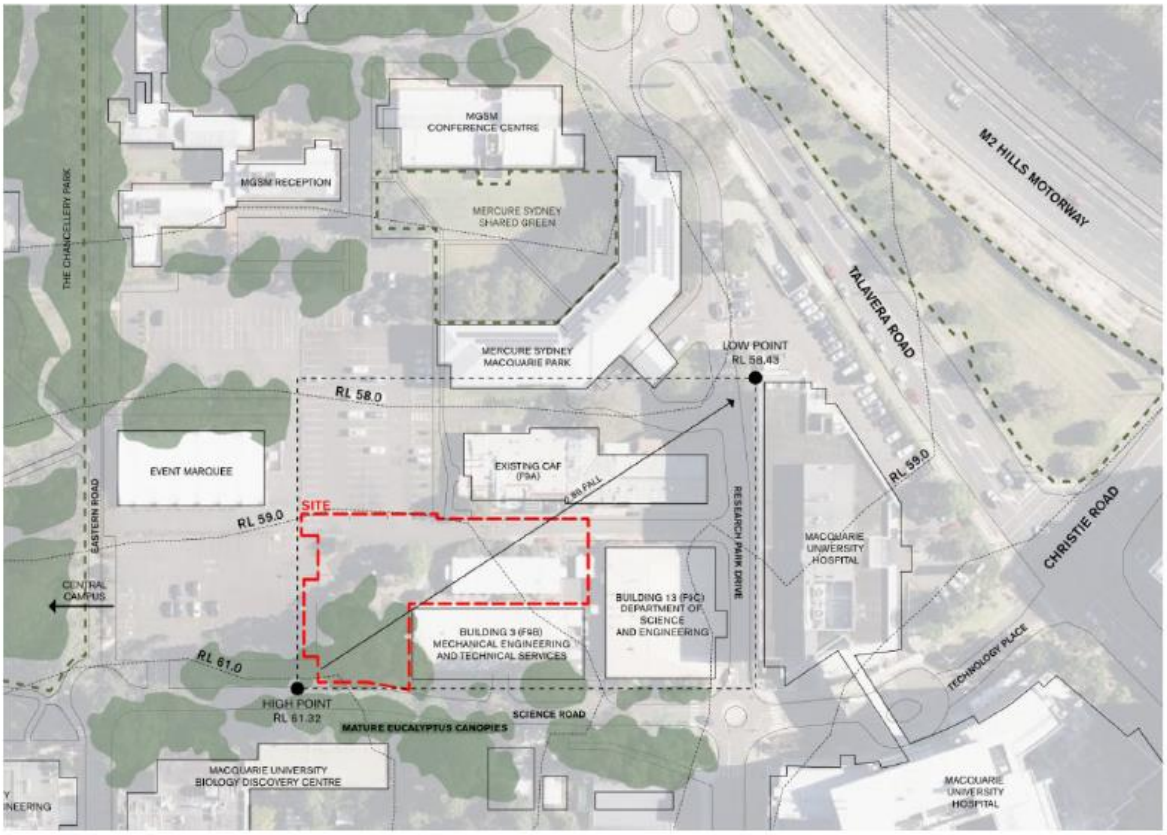


Figure 4 Surrounding buildings within the University

Source: BLP

2. THE PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Proposal

The proposal seeks consent for construction of a new purpose-built facility for Macquarie University Central Animal Facility (inclusive of a new Zebrafish Facility) and associated landscaping.

Specifically, the proposal involves:

- Site preparation works including tree removal, earthworks and the relocation of existing demountable and storage containers located on the site;
- Construction and use of a three-storey building with a gross floor area of 2,581m2 for the purposes of a biomedical research facility;
- Services upgrades; and
- Associated landscaping, tree replacement, and public domain works.

The key development data is provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Key Development Data

Control	Proposal
Site area	Approximately 2,765m^2
GFA	2,581m^2
FSR	Maximum FSR development standards apply to the land along the Campus' Herring Road frontage and the southern part of the Epping Road frontage, however, there is no maximum FSR standard applying to the land subject of this application.
Max Height	Maximum height of buildings development standards applies to land along the Campus' Herring Road frontage and the southern part of the Epping Road frontage, however there is no maximum building height standard applying to the land subject to this application. The proposed maximum height of the building is 16.09m.
Landscaped area	Adequate landscaping area will be provided within the perimeter of the subject site. The application has been accompanied by a detailed Landscape Plan.
Car Parking spaces	None proposed. The proposal will not result in any changes to parking arrangements nor the number of parking spaces on the campus. There will be no increase in students or staff on the campus and so the proposal will not create any additional parking demand.
Setbacks	The development does not directly front Science Road; however, a setback is provided to the building to the south of the Central Animal Facility. There will be a 3m setback to the building line of Mechanical Engineering and Technical Services building (Building 3 F9B), that fronts Science Road to the southern boundary.

Figure 5 – Photomontage of the proposed development from adjacent carpark to the west

Figure 6: Proposed Landscape Design

2.2 Background

The development application was lodged on **12 November 2024**. A chronology of the development application since lodgement is outlined in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Chronology of the DA

Date	Event
18 November 2024	Exhibition of the application
12 December 2024	Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) meeting was undertaken.
20 December 2024	Request for Information from Council to applicant
5 February 2025	Panel briefing

2.3 Site History

The submitted Statement of Environmental Effects has stated the following site history:

The Macquarie University Campus Masterplan 2014 is an internal document that was prepared by the University to guide future development at the campus. It does not have any statutory weight and does not form part of the Concept Plan Approval. The Masterplan is now 10 years old, and no longer aligns with the future direction of the University.

The University is in the process of reviewing their internal Masterplan to reflect the University's move towards a science and research-focussed university. The proposed Central Animal Facility is not consistent with the current Masterplan, however, this does not impact the proposal's compliance with the Concept Plan Approval, as required by Section 4.24(2) of the EP&A Act. The University is at the beginning of the Masterplan review process, and it will take some time to complete. The review will not be completed prior to determination of the Macquarie University Central Animal Facility DA.

Under the Macquarie University Design Excellent Strategy and Urban Design Guidelines, each development parcel within the campus has been assigned a lot number. The proposed development has been sited to enable the retention of the existing Central Animal Facility, Science and Engineering Building and Mechanical Engineering and Services Buildings, and so it does not necessarily align with the current lot control boundaries. Notwithstanding, an assessment has been provided against the lot controls for Lot A03, as shown in ***Figure 20*** *below.*

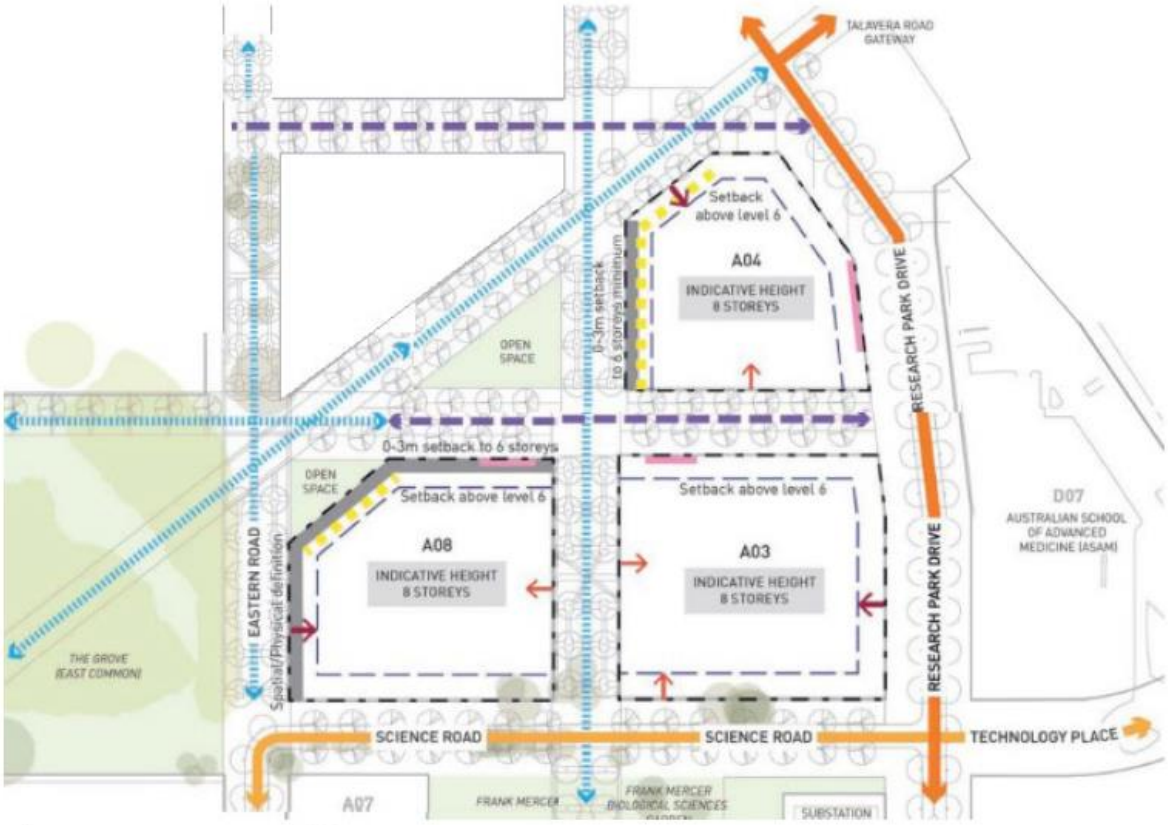


Figure 20 Lot A03 control diagram

Source: Macquarie University Design Excellence Strategy and Urban Design Guidelines

*The current controls for Lot A03 are provided above at **Figure 20**. **Figure 21** shows the existing site context overlaid with the current lot control boundaries contained in the Guidelines, and **Figure 22** shows the proposed amendments to the Guidelines.*

The proposed location of the Central Animal Facility has resulted from the need to retain existing buildings in the short-medium term, and the potential construction of a new research building/precinct at the corner of Science Road and Research Park Drive. As a result, the north-south connection along the western frontage of Lot A03 has been moved to the left to respond to the siting of the proposed Central Animal Facility. Despite this, the original intent of a connection between the open green space to the north and Science Road is still achieved.

Once the surrounding buildings in Lot A03 have been demolished, an integrated development can be built in the future. This future development would then achieve a prominent corner identity, ground floor activation and a street address off Research Park Drive, with separate services access from the northern shared way, in-line with the original intent of the Guidelines and lot controls.

*As shown at **Figure 22**, the revised lot controls continue to maintain all primary and secondary roads, key pedestrian and services access ways, as well as maintaining existing significant trees and the landscaped character of the campus. The amendments to the Guidelines generally comprise minor adjustments to the lot sizes and relocating the north-south pedestrian routes to the west of the site to allow for development to occur in keeping with the original intent of the Guidelines.*

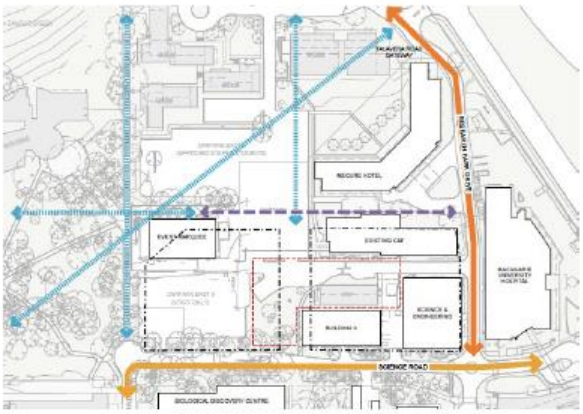


Figure 21 Site context with existing lot boundaries
Source: Macquarie University Design Excellence Strategy and Urban Design Guidelines

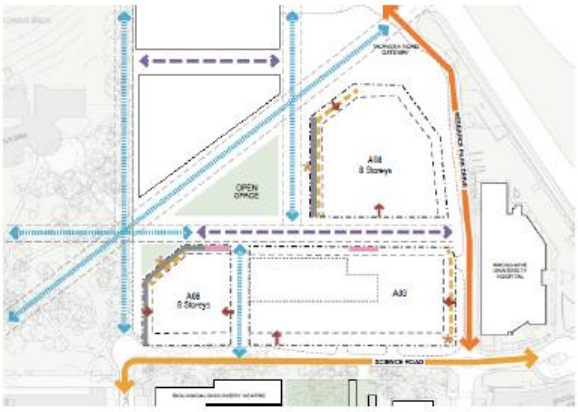


Figure 22 Proposed lot controls
Source: BLP

It should also be noted that Macquarie University is intending on redeveloping the Mechanical Engineering and Technical Services building currently located south of the site into a future research centre. It is likely the built form will be higher than that of the proposed building. The building footprint of this new proposed building is shown indicatively in ***Figure 24*** *below. The potential future scenario also includes a temporary green space in the location of the existing Central Animal Facility (which is to be demolished), with the area to be redeveloped when needed by the University.*

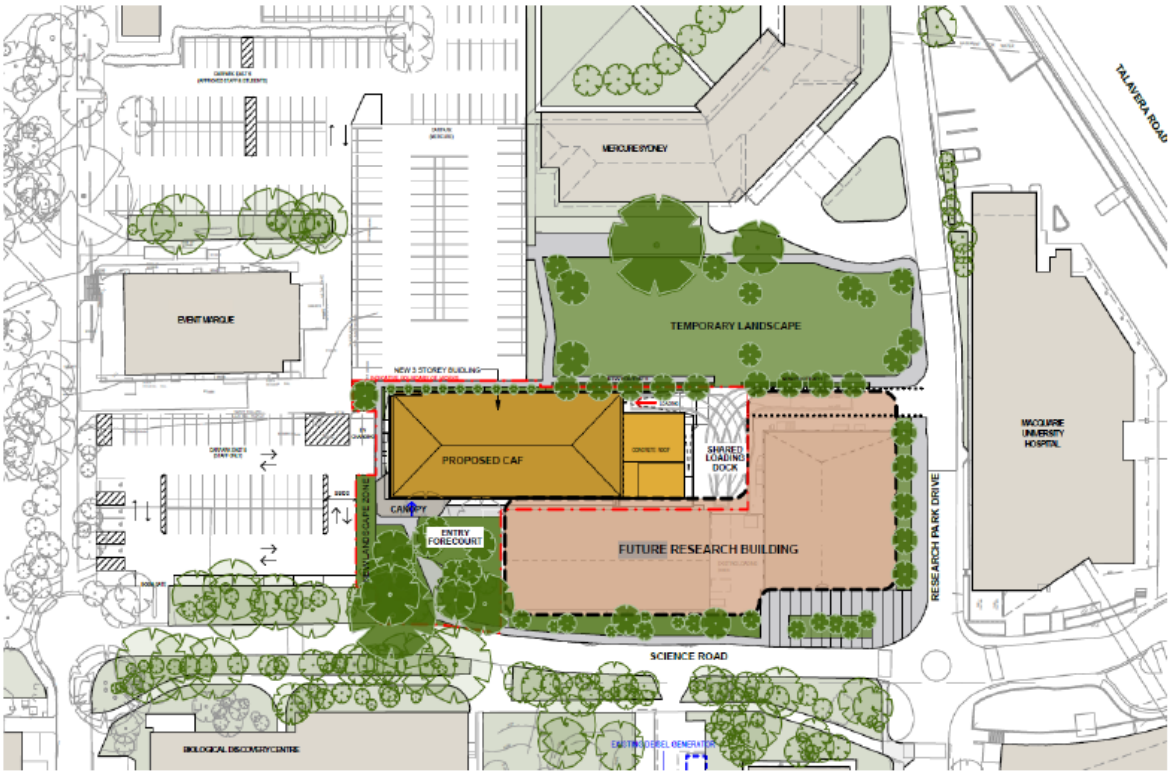


Figure 24 Indicative future scenario of the surrounding area
Source: BLP

3. PLANNING CONTROLS

The site is located within the MU1 Mixed Use zone pursuant to Clause 2.3 of the Ryde Local Environmental Plan 2024 (RLEP2014). The proposal is permissible in the zone with consent. The proposal is consistent with the zone objectives.

Further, Chapter 3, Part 3.5 of the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP relates to universities and outlines specific development controls. As prescribed within Section 3.46, the proposed development is permitted with consent as it is development for the purposes of an existing university and will be used for the physical, social, cultural or intellectual development or welfare of the community.

4. REFERRALS AND SUBMISSIONS

4.1 Council Referrals

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

Table 3: Consideration of Council Referrals

Officer	Comments	Resolved
Development Engineering	No objections subject to recommended conditions	Yes (conditions)
Traffic Engineering	No objections subject to recommended conditions	Yes (conditions)
Landscape Architects	No objections subject to recommended conditions	Yes (conditions)
Environmental Health Officer	Council's Environmental Health Officer reviewed the proposal and raised concerns in relation to acoustic, air quality, contamination, and waste management.	Refer to Council's RFI letter (Appendix 1)
Public Domain	No objections subject to recommended conditions	Yes (conditions)

4.2 Community Consultation

The proposal was notified in accordance with the Council's Community Participation Plan from 18 November 2024 until 4 December 2024, no submissions have been received in response to the public exhibition of the proposal.

5. KEY ISSUES

Refer to Council's RFI letter (Appendix 1).

6. RECOMMENDATION

Following a preliminary assessment of the development application in relation to the development controls, taking into account the issues raised from the Council officers and Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP), a RFI letter has been sent to the applicant on 20 December 2024 for their response. It is noted that the requested information shall be submitted by **31 January 2025.**

It is also noted that the application could be determined in May 2025 (subject to applicant's adequate response to the Council's RFI letter).

7. ATTACHMENTS

The following attachment is provided:

- Appendix 1 - Council's RFI Letter

City of Ryde

Lifestyle and opportunity @ your doorstep

Sent via the Portal:

Macquarie University
2 Link Road, Macquarie University, NSW 2109

20 December 2024

Dear Mario,

192 Balaclava Road Macquarie Park
Local Development Application No. LDA2024/0231

A preliminary assessment of your development application has been carried out.

The following additional information is required pursuant to Clause 36 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021. You are advised that in accordance with Part 4 Division 4 of the Regulations, the statutory time for assessment of the application has been deferred pending receipt of this information or Council is notified that the information will not be provided.

Environmental Management

1. ***Acoustics -*** A revised Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan is required and must be prepared using the correct noise criteria from the EPA Interim Construction Noise Guidelines for building works from 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 4pm, being 5dB above RBL, as per Table 2 of the Guidelines. The acoustic consultant must also provide specific control strategies for remedying noise exceedances to ensure that the noise criteria can be achieved, given the predicted noise level is currently in excess of 5dB above RBL.

2. ***Air quality -*** The applicant shall demonstrate how the proposed ventilation system, including combined manifold system will comply with the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 and Protection of the Environment Operations (Clean Air) Regulation 2022. Details of any filtration system should be provided.

3. ***Contamination -*** A Detailed Site Investigation is to be prepared by a suitably qualified consultant that undertakes an assessment of the site including a sampling program in accordance with the EPA Sampling Design Guidelines 2022. The assessment should include further investigations into the possibly contaminated area around BH01. The report is to determine if the site is suitable for the proposed development.

4. ***Waste -*** The applicant shall provide a detailed plan of its waste storage room and hazardous waste room on ground floor.

Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) Comment

Design Principles	UDRP Comments
Context and Neighbourhood Character 1. Good design responds and contributes to its context which is the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship and the character they create when combined. It also includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions. 2. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area's existing or future character. 3. Well-designed buildings respond to and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood. 4. Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in the following areas: a. Established areas b. Areas undergoing change c. Areas identified for change.	The Panel remains aware that there is an approved Macquarie University Concept Plan, Campus-wide Design Excellence Strategy and Urban Design Guidelines that guide development proposals within the campus. The Panel understands that the University is currently reviewing this master plan and the Health and Research precinct in particular. This DA is sited in a manner that is inconsistent with the current master plan. As the University's master plan sets the framework for the delivery of a cohesive and amenable campus, the Panel considers it critical that the Concept Plan and Guidelines be formally amended to reflect this proposal (and other recent proposals that the Panel is aware of). Amending the master plan will require some adjustment of planned pedestrian and service links to accommodate the current DA proposal. The proposed building footprint is located across a secondary pedestrian pathway that traverses north-south. Material has been provided to indicate how pedestrian links would be rearranged to the west of the subject site and to demonstrate how a future 'shared way' (of some significance) might run east-west along the northern site boundary. Although this material begins to demonstrate that the University master plan is capable of adaptation around the current DA, a thorough amendment is required. This material provided indicates that the subject DA will - over time - attain greater visual prominence as a built element that effectively terminates an existing north-south link. Similarly, as surrounding buildings are demolished, particularly to the north, the visual prominence of the subject DA will increase. In the interim, the proposed building is tightly sited between existing single-storey buildings to the north, south and east. It is understood that these adjacent buildings may be removed in the mid- to longer-term. In the meantime, the DA is 'squeezed' into its context presenting safety and security concerns, particularly to the south. This is discussed further in this report.

Design Principles	UDRP Comments
Built Form and Scale 1. Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings. 2. Good design also achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose in terms of: a. building alignments, proportions, b. building type, c. building articulation d. the manipulation of building elements. 3. Appropriate built form a. defines the public domain, b. contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, c. provides internal amenity and outlook.	The DA proposal has generally developed positively since the first review. It provides a simple and elegant built form and a comfortable scale, noting the relative tightness along the southern boundary. The building is generally well-proportioned, and the simplicity of this form is complemented by facade treatments that are richly detailed and modelled. The Panel restates its earlier concern for the one interruption to this strong, simple form. The 'cut-out' in the northwest corner of the building, created to accommodate the loading dock, dilutes the purity of the building form and also risks exposing the building's less resolved service areas to a future 'shared way' when the existing CAF is removed. This arrangement would be better resolved if the loading area enjoyed greater enclosure, possibly extending the northern facade to complete the pure rectangular form. The primary pedestrian entry to the building is clearly identifiable from Science Road, and the retention of existing trees in this forecourt is supported. The building plan and entry sequence implies a future northern entry (which may also reinforce north-south links proposed in the master plan). Understanding the secure nature of the facility, the Panel encourages greater architectural presence, and a 'signal of entry' which might be implied on the northern facade. It is important to safeguard the potential to provide a future northern entry to the building as the campus continues to evolve. Given the uncertainty of amendments required to the master plan, it remains somewhat unclear how the building should define the immediate public domain – and the Panel remains concerned for the proposed public domain interface with the carparks to the north and west, as well as for the narrow separation to the south.

Design Principles	UDRP Comments
Density 1. Good design achieves a high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in a density appropriate to the site and its context. 2. Appropriate densities are consistent with the area's existing or projected population. 3. Appropriate densities can be sustained by the following: a. existing or proposed infrastructure, b. public transport, c. access to jobs, d. community facilities and e. the environment.	The proposal is well within the maximum amount of GFA allowed under the existing concept plan and is well below the maximum height. The density in the context of the overall campus is considered acceptable.
Sustainability 1. Good design combines positive environmental, social and economic outcomes. 2. Good sustainable design includes 3. use of natural cross ventilation and sunlight for the amenity and livability of residents and 4. passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. 5. Good sustainable design also includes the following: a. recycling and reuse of materials and waste, b. use of sustainable materials and c. deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.	Sustainability was not specifically discussed in the context of the meeting. The Panel encourages the adoption of ambitious sustainability targets for the project, and these should be included in further documentation supporting the DA.

Design Principles	UDRP Comments
Landscape 1. Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. 2. A positive image and contextual fit of well-designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood. 3. Good landscape design enhances the development's environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the following: a. local context, b. coordinating water and soil management, c. solar access, d. micro-climate, e. tree canopy, f. habitat values and preserving green networks. g. Good landscape design optimises useability, h. privacy and opportunities for social interaction, i. equitable access, j. respect for neighbours' amenity and 4. Good landscape design provides for practical establishment and long term management.	The building is generally located on the site of an existing paved parking area and existing demountable building. The DA proposes the retention of existing trees along Science Road to create the primary building address and associated landscape forecourt, which is supported. The Panel suggests that it may be premature to provide access paths along the northern and western boundaries until greater certainty exists regarding the amended master plan. Consequently, it may be more appropriate to refine the current landscape proposals to the north and west not anticipating pedestrian thoroughfare. Similarly, the Panel suggests that it may provide a stronger sense of safety and security to design out casual pedestrian movement along the southern boundary in the narrow separation to the neighbouring building.

Design Principles	UDRP Comments
Amenity 1. Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for residents and neighbours. 2. Good design contributes to positive living environments and resident well-being. 3. Good amenity combines a. appropriate room dimensions and shapes, b. access to sunlight, c. natural ventilation, d. outlook, e. visual and acoustic privacy, storage, f. indoor and outdoor space, g. efficient layouts and service areas h. ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.	The Panel understands that the proposal has a low population density, and internal spaces are required to be controlled for security, climate and lighting. Most internal areas have natural daylight excluded. The circulation spaces, common amenities and areas where daylight is available are provided with controlled daylight, which is supported, subject to comments made below under Aesthetics regarding the integration of vision glazing within facade panels.

Design Principles	UDRP Comments
Safety 1. Good design optimises safety and security within the development and the public domain. 2. Good design provides for quality public and private spaces that are clearly defined and fit for the intended purpose. 3. Opportunities to maximise passive surveillance of public and communal areas promote safety. 4. A positive relationship between public and private spaces is achieved through clearly defined secure access points and well lit and visible areas that are easily maintained and appropriate to the location and purpose.	As noted previously, the proximity of the proposed building to other existing buildings creates narrow, foreboding and poorly defined spaces capable of concealment and creating security issues. The Panel suggests designing out casual pedestrian access to these spaces generally, and to the southern pathway in particular. Required egress pathways may need alternative treatments to balance safe egress with safety and security.

Design Principles	UDRP Comments
Aesthetics 1. Good design achieves a built form that has good proportions and a balanced composition of elements, reflecting the internal layout and structure. 2. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours and textures. 3. The visual appearance of a well-designed apartment development responds to the existing or future local context, particularly desirable elements and repetitions of the streetscape.	The Panel thanks the design team for the developed description of the design intent, including annotated large scale 3D views and elevations of each primary facade type. The proposed external appearance is generally supported, noting the positive resolution of composition, proportion, materials and details. Perforated screens over glazing are intended to balance climate control and privacy while providing transparency with resolved detailing and depth to an otherwise simple form. The Panel encourages further refinement of the perforated 'veil' element that addresses the west and part north and south elevations. Understanding the need to provide maintenance access between the glass-line and the perforated panels, the Panel feels the architectural composition would be stronger if the outer face of the 'veil' was co-planar with the remainder of the northern and southern facades. The Panel supports the proposed material palette and colours which help the building integrate with the natural landscape. The developed facade detailing is supported and should be further refined through design development to ensure the design intent is carried through to construction. The design team is encouraged to resolve issues such as: • The size and proportion of various panel elements • The integration of glazing into panellised components • The scale of panel perforations • Vertical and horizontal panel jointing generally • Mitred corner panel junctions • Capping trims
Further Comments & Outcome	
The Panel encourages the proponent to adopt the recommendations set out in this report, and for Council to be satisfied of the resultant design quality.	

Planning

- The development application was not accompanied by a detailed breakdown of the associated GFA under the Concept Plan and executed VPA as requested in the Pre-DA advice. It is noted that this is required under the terms of the VPA with Council and the University. In this regard, a detailed GFA calculation summary across university precinct should be provided for Council's further review.
- A detailed information of the relocation of existing structures should be provided for Council's further review.

Please note that comments from Council's Development Engineer, and Landscape Architect, is yet to be provided. Any further request for additional information will be outlined in separate correspondence.

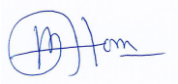
You are encouraged to submit amended plans and documentation that addresses the above-mentioned matters. This information is required to be provided by **31 January 2025**. The requested information is required to be uploaded to the NSW planning portal under the application details PAN-482694.

To avoid delays your cooperation is appreciated to submit the requested information by **31 January 2025.** Please ensure your response to the above issues is a genuine attempt to resolve the issues as Council will not seek any further information / amendments. Once received, Council will proceed to assess and determine the application without further consultation.

An additional assessment fee (25% to 50% of the statutory DA fee, depending on the extent of amendments) must be paid. Revised plans may be re-notified where the changes intensify or change the impact of the development. Additional notification fees will be charged in accordance with our Fees and Charges.

Should you require further assistance please contact me on 0481 684 131 or email mahbuba@ryde.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Mahbub Alam
Senior Town Planner