

5 July 2006

The Hon. Frank Sartor, MP
Minister for Planning
Level 33, Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney, NSW 2000

Dear Minister,

**Re: University of Western Sydney (UWS) Westmead Site
Request for consideration of Concept Plans**

Thank you for the recent advice from the Department of Planning that you have agreed to consider the UWS site at Westmead as a potential State Significant site for listing under Schedule 3 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005. The letter from the Department outlines the nature and content of a study that needs to be undertaken by the University to obtain this nomination.

The University seeks the Minister's opinion under Clause 6 of State Environmental Planning Policy Major Projects 2005, that Part 3A of the EP&A Act applies to the proposed redevelopment for the University site. The University also seeks the authorisation to concurrently lodge the concept plans for the project.

As noted in the Department's letter, considerable studies have been prepared for the Westmead precinct including the UWS site and these would form the basis of the application for nomination for State Significance. As the envisaged redevelopment of the University site will require significant private sector participation, the University proposes to select the developer through a two stage process – Expression of Interest and Call for Detailed Proposals in line with Government procedures. The University proposes to make the planning submissions to the Department in conjunction with the selected private sector partner and incorporating the private sector's concepts for the site.

As outlined in the accompanying submission to the Department of Planning, the redevelopment of the site constitutes a complex multi-staged development with capital expenditure in excess of \$400m.

The envisaged redevelopment would comprise a mixture of retail, commercial and medium density residential uses. With its location adjacent to transport nodes and the employment zone, the redevelopment is consistent with the aims of the recently announce Metropolitan strategy.

The University has been in continuous discussions with the Department of Planning and Parramatta City Council throughout the preparation of the Westmead precinct studies and we believe the proposed redevelopment is consistent with their aspirations for the precinct .

The University thanks the Minister for the agreement to consider the site for State Significance and seeks your opinion on the application of Part 3A of the EP&A Act to the redevelopment of this key site as part of the Westmead precinct growth and vitalisation of the public domain, together with concurrent consent to the concept plans.

The University also thanks the Officers of the Department of Planning for their co-operation. Should there be any enquiries on this preliminary documentation please do not hesitate to contact Michael Gallagher – 0419 626 820 or 02 9953 1019.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tung Wu', with a stylized, flowing script.

Professor Chung-Tong Wu
Acting Vice-Chancellor

Attchmnts: Proposal outline

Attachment: Proposal Outline

Background

In May 2005, the NSW Government gazetted the State Environmental Planning Policy (State Significant Development) 2005. One of the stated aims of this policy is to: "facilitate redevelopment of major sites no longer appropriate or suitable for public purposes". The UWS site at Westmead provides an opportunity to realise this objective of the SEPP.

The University of Western Sydney made application in October 2005 for consideration by the Minister for nomination as a site of State Significance. In their letter of response of 15 December 2005, the Department of Planning advised that the Minister had agreed to consider the UWS site at Westmead as a potential State significant site for listing under Schedule 3 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005. The letter from the Department outlines the nature and content of a study that needs to be undertaken by the University to obtain this nomination.

The University will be seeking participation by the private sector for the development of the site as outlined in our discussions. The proponent will be selected on their technical submission (concept proposal for the site) and the commercial offer. The University believes that participation by the private sector in the preparation of the various planning submissions would be advantageous to both the University and the public as the submissions will more accurately reflect the development concepts for the site.

Application

The University seeks to submit the concept plans for the site to support the submission seeking nomination as a Site of State Significance and the rezoning of the site.

The University also wishes to submit these concept plans to seek approval for the development controls applying to the development. The University has prepared the information below and seeks the Minister's opinion under Clause 6 of the Major projects SEPP, that Part 3A of the EP&A Act will apply to the envisaged redevelopment on the University site.

A. The Site

The Development site potentially incorporates five land parcels:

1. The University site
2. A small parcel of the adjoining Marist property which is subject to rights of way to the University and currently occupied as part of the car park on the University grounds
3. Property rights to small parcels of Railcorp lands to create grade separated access to Westmead station
4. Air rights over Darcy Road for a pedestrian bridge over the Transitway and vehicular road
5. Property rights for the landing of the pedestrian bridge on Westmead Hospital.

The site description, topography and other facets are described in the draft Expression of Interest document attached.

B State Planning Objectives

The State and regional significance of the Westmead Precinct with the State's largest hospital complex, research facilities and other employment drivers is apparent. The significance of the Westmead precinct as a State and regional "bio-hub" into the future is endorsed by the Metropolitan Strategy. The Metropolitan Strategy supported the continued growth of Westmead as a medical and research precinct of State and regional importance.

Part of the success of any precinct is the role of the public domain, the pedestrian linkages to transport and the provision of retail, recreational and other amenity to support the employment zone and its workers. As described below, the UWS site with the site's redevelopment potential is uniquely placed to serve this function in the precinct.

The Metropolitan Strategy also supported the provision of medium and higher density accommodation adjacent to transport nodes and employment zones. The UWS site provides this opportunity, with the site:

1. adjacent to Westmead station. Westmead station has frequent service of the main western line with all trains stopping at Westmead.
2. adjacent to the new Transitway and bus route from Rouse Hill to Parramatta CBD and interchange.
3. adjacent to the Hospital precinct with Westmead Hospital, Children's Hospital and Cumberland Hospital
4. adjacent to two major High schools – Marist College and Catherine McAuley High.

Various planning studies of the precinct have identified shortcomings. The Study of the Westmead Precinct by the Government Architect - "The Westmead Precinct Structure Plan" was conducted in July 2004. The Study described the shortcomings in the public domain and the public domain character and raised many issues within the precinct including:-

- "the intense activity that takes place in the different institutions and industries is not reflected in the public domain."
- "there is a lack of civic and social centre"
- "improve public space connections" - the linkages between the employment zones and transport nodes need improvement

The Westmead Precinct Implementation Plan by Don Fox and Associates, prepared for the Department of Planning, Parramatta Council and major landowners at Westmead, identifies a zone "Hawkesbury and Town Square" for activation of the precinct. The University site is by far the largest land parcel in this zone.

The University site with its size and location is uniquely and solely placed to respond to some of these precinct shortcomings. Other lands in the precinct are highly utilised for their respective purposes (hospital, school). Residential lands are in small parcels and would require consolidation to generate land parcels for significant redevelopment as areas of civic and public amenity. Some consolidation for redevelopment into blocks of residential and commercial strata is occurring along Hawkesbury Road. These developments are not of a scale to significantly change the public domain character. The University site redevelopment is a key to the regional and local amenity envisaged.

C Project Scale and Complexity

The scale of the project will be determined on the zoning, floor space ratio building heights and other development controls applied to the site. Although the studies referred to above do not have planning control status, the studies do provide significant insight and guidance on the potential development controls likely to be applied to the site.

Based on the site area of approximately 40,000 square metres and a projected Floor Space Ratio of 3:1 (based on information in the Draft Don Fox report), the site accommodates a development of 120,000 square metres. Thus the development could incorporate:

- Retail facilities of 10,000 to 20,000 square metres. The retail facilities and conversion of the heritage buildings in the Greenwood Centre at North Sydney for retail, restaurant and hotel functions provided activation, amenity and linkages between the commercial core and rail station. The UWS site offers a similar opportunity at Westmead.
- Commercial strata of 10,000 to 20,000 square metres. The proximity of the Hospital provide opportunities for commercial space associated with medical consulting and support services.
- Residential facilities of 60,000 to 100,000 square metres. Consistent with the Metropolitan strategy, the site offers the opportunity to provide residential accommodation adjacent to transport and employment zones thereby reducing usage of motor cars for commuting. It is proposed that the residential development will incorporate some accommodation for patients and carers to the adjacent hospitals.

Based on these studies, the completed development would have a value in the range of \$400m. The project is likely to have multiple uses, multiple buildings and complex interfaces with the urban infrastructure. The potential interfaces with the urban infrastructure are outlined in the EOI document attached. In summary, the project is potentially large and complex.

D Current Zoning and Uses

The site is currently zoned Special Uses University.

SREP No.28 Parramatta Part 6 Precinct 4 – Westmead Precinct
Describes:

The site is not used for University teaching purposes at present. A minor part of the site is used for UWS administrative purposes. The University's teaching was relocated from Westmead to its Rydalmere Campus in 1998.

The site is predominantly vacant with large areas allocated to outdoor car parking. Site improvements comprise:

- A four level Federation brick building of 4,420 square metres. Part of this building is utilised for administration purposes for the University. The building was built in 1915 as the Westmead Boys Home – an orphanage for boys. This building is listed on the State Register as an item of historical significance.
- A two storey Victorian Residence of approximately 270 square metres built around 1880. The building has been modified and altered. The building is currently vacant. This building is also listed on the State Heritage Register.

- Several low rise buildings (several of which are demountable buildings) spread around the site. Some of these buildings have short term leases to the NSW Police.

Although the site is a significant size and location, the Lot is not large enough to be redeveloped to serve as a University of Western Sydney campus site.

E Views of Parramatta City Council

Statutory Position

SREP 28 (1999) is the Planning Instrument for Parramatta. SREP 28 divides the Parramatta district into Precincts each with its own aims, planning principles and guidelines.

Clause 39 of SREP describes the "Planning aims for the Westmead Precinct". These are as follows:"

- (a) to encourage a vibrant Precinct with a distinct health and teaching identity,*
- (b) to improve direct and efficient access to and through the precinct from other parts of the Greater Metropolitan Region, and to improve linkage of Westmead Hospital to the public transport network,*
- (c) to provide opportunities for a range of housing types,*
- (d) to develop a mixed use centre of retail, residential, commercial and community services at the transport node serving the Precinct,*
- (e) to facilitate physical and business research links to other Precincts, especially the City Centre, Rydalmere and Camellia Precincts.*

These aims must be considered by the consent authority in assessing development applications and should be considered when a council prepares a local environment plan for land within the Westmead Precinct. "

Part of the UWS site (25%) has been excised and now forms part of the Transitway – consistent with (b) above. As described in the EOI document, the site provides an opportunity for a grade separated pedestrian link from the station to Westmead Hospital.

The remainder of the site is ideally located for the planning aims (c) and (d) above.

The Department of Planning (Western Division) and Parramatta City Council have been leading the formulation of the Westmead Precinct Implementation Plan (Don Fox and Associates Report). The proposed uses for the University site are consistent with this report which may form the basis for future planning instruments.

Att. Draft EOI Document.