

Mr Peter Shellie  
Defence Housing Authority  
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Dear Mr Shellie

## Edgelea Site, former UTS Campus, Lindfield Amendment to RE1 Zoning Provisions Heritage Impact Commentary

As requested, we have reviewed the current proposal to amend the RE1 Zoning provisions within the former UTS Campus Ku-ring-gai. Our comments are specifically aimed at the likely heritage impact of the proposal on the heritage significance of the listed heritage item, being the former UTS Ku-ring-gai buildings. The heritage item is identified on the Heritage Map within Part 30 of SEPP Major Development 2005.

Graham Brooks and Associates Pty Ltd, Heritage Consultants prepared the July 2004 *Heritage Assessment and Conservation Strategy* for the UTS Campus, Lindfield.

The request for amendments to the permitted uses and heights on the RE1 zoned land, which currently comprises the formal oval of the UTS campus has arisen from a request by Ku-ring-gai Council for the introduction of "Community Facilities" associated with the reformatted oval. These facilities are to be approximately 300 sq metres in area plus supporting amenities. A careful analysis by the urban designers, in conjunction with the heritage consultants, has determined that the most appropriate physical and functional location would be at the eastern end of the oval, in the vicinity of the current UTS Gymnasium.

Accordingly, this Heritage Impact Assessment examines the proposed amendments to the permitted use and height on the RE1 land in the context of the requested Community Facilities.

The relevant zoning controls are contained in Part 30 Clauses 11 and 17 of the SEPP Major Developments 2005. In essence these limit the uses to those associated with recreation and the maximum building height to 3 metres, which equates to single storey development.

### **Clause 11 Zone RE1 Public Recreation**

*(1) The objectives of Zone RE1 Public Recreation are as follows:*

- (a) to enable land to be used for public open space or recreational purposes,*
- (b) to provide a range of recreational settings and activities and compatible land uses,*
- (c) to protect and enhance the natural environment for recreational purposes.*

*(2) Development for any of the following purposes is permitted without development consent on land within Zone RE1 Public Recreation:*

*car parks; roads.*

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(3) Development for any of the following purposes is permitted only with development consent in Zone RE1 Public Recreation:

kiosks; recreation areas.

(4) Except as otherwise provided by this Policy, development is prohibited on land within Zone RE1 Public Recreation unless it is permitted by subclause (2) or (3).

#### **Clause 17 Height of buildings**

(1) The objectives of this clause are as follows:

- (a) to protect the heritage significance of the UTS Ku-ring-gai Campus main building,
- (b) to protect the views to the UTS Ku-ring-gai Campus main building.

(2) The height of a building on any land within the UTS Ku-ring-gai Campus site is not to exceed the maximum height shown for the land on the Height of Buildings Map.

### **Assessment of Heritage Significance**

The 2004 *Heritage Assessment and Conservation Strategy* developed the following Statement of Heritage Significance for the UTS Campus.

#### **Statement of Heritage Significance**

*The former William Balmain Teachers College, now the UTS Ku-ring-gai campus was a component in the late 1960s development of tertiary level teacher training in NSW. It was one of three major new teacher training centres at the time, the others being at Newcastle and Goulburn, in recognition of a need for greater numbers of qualified teachers within the State school system. Its initial association was with the well-known Teachers College from Balmain to a new campus in Lindfield. Subsequently it became the Ku-ring-gai College of Advanced Education and more recently as the Ku-ring-gai campus of the University of Technology Sydney, indicating the progressive integration of teacher training into mainstream tertiary education.*

*The College is associated with the institutional building design programme of the Government Architect's Office, most notably with its design architect, David Don Turner, who was closely involved in the design work for all of the major stages of work from 1968 until 1989. The natural bushland character and setting of the campus is also closely associated with the well known and influential Landscape Architect, Bruce Mackenzie and Associates.*

*It may be considered important at a State level for its strong Post War Brutalist architectural expression, its close and confident relationship between architecture and its bushland setting, its adoption of the internal street and compact organisational planning and the level of design continuity that came from the involvement of the original design architect in all major stages of development. The college was conceived as an "Italian Hill Town", set confidently on a prominent wooded ridgeline, designed to be viewed from a distance, while retaining the majority of the original bushland setting to the east, south and west, by the use of a compact building footprint.*

*The new College was designed at a time when the suburban expansion of the Northern Suburbs of Sydney were pushing out from the Federation and Interwar settlement of the ridgelines into the surrounding heavily wooded sloping topography. The Sydney School of Architecture, known from the work of a number of pioneer architects and landscape design professionals, developed a strong affinity with and respect for the bushland settings of the many houses that epitomised this movement. At an institutional level, the College translated these ideas into a major educational complex.*

*The College introduced the concept of an internal pedestrian street as a major planning device for educational buildings in NSW. This had been used internationally in such places as Le Corbusier's housing development in Marseilles and John Andrew's Scarborough College in Toronto. It responded well to the requirement for a close interaction between students and teaching staff. It also facilitated the minimal use of the bush by students, letting the natural bushland come as close as possible to the buildings as a visual backdrop, visible through large windows. The setting reveals the success of its carefully managed construction techniques that protected the surrounding natural landscape. It is an excellent example of how bushland management can encourage regeneration after major fires and construction intervention.*

*The College may be considered significant at a local level for its associations with the thousands of students, teaching and administrative staff since it was initially constructed in 1971. It has positive associations with the wider Ku-ring-gai community who utilise its community facilities, with the architectural and landscape architectural community for its strongly expressed design and planning principles, and with the wider public who see the main buildings rising above the bushland setting from the south east. The College was recognised for its architectural, planning and landscape qualities. It was awarded the Sulman Award for architecture in 1978.*

*The overall site is not expected to yield additional information about prior usage or of former ownership patterns. Given that the original settlement function was orcharding, followed by Commonwealth development of the rifle range, the site is unlikely to contain any material of historical archaeological significance.*

When the site was included in SEPP Major Developments 2005 the heritage listing was placed only over the main campus building complex footprint. It did not extend into the surrounding landscape.

## **Assessment of Heritage Impact**

### **Permissible uses**

Clause 11(1)(b) sets one of the Objectives for RE1 zoned land as providing for *a range of recreational settings and activities and compatible land uses*.

The proposed Community Facilities that have been requested by Council comply with that Objective. They will reinforce the functionality of the oval and replace a very small pavilion that was erected at the western end of the oval in the early years of its use within the UTS campus. We understand that the proposed facilities will be entirely compatible with the recreational setting and activities that can be anticipated for the oval in its new location.

The oval was always an important component of the overall campus, even though it was one of the later additions within the overall development programme that extended for some years. There are no heritage based reasons why the proposed Community Facilities and their close relationship to the relocated oval would not be compatible with the heritage significance of the listed heritage buildings or their wider visual/functional curtilage and setting. In fact there is a strong potential that the proposed facilities will actually reinforce the recreational use of the oval by providing much needed support accommodation.

We assume that the provision of the Community Facilities will be the subject of a future Development Application.

### **Height of Buildings**

The 2004 *Heritage Assessment and Conservation Strategy* closely examined the nature of the buildings and the way they were integrated with the site. Unusually for most heritage research, we had the privilege of working with the David Turner, the original architect and Bruce Mackenzie, Landscape Architect. As noted in the Statement of Heritage Significance, one of the most important aspects of the project was the way it grew organically across the

landscape, progressively extending to the north-west away from the original Stage 1 components. All of the various building components were linked by the use of an internal pedestrian street, a major innovation for educational buildings in New South Wales.

The use of the street and the close proximity of later buildings to earlier components responded well to the requirement for a close relationship between users while minimising the use of the overall site and letting the natural landscaped features of the site come as close to the buildings as possible.

All of the planning and urban design work that was subsequently undertaken on the site, which eventually culminated in the current conceptual arrangement of new buildings and other features, sought to take the original design approach into the future. New buildings could be erected in close proximity to the existing and they could successfully adopt similar heights and massing as those that existed. David Turner actively supported this planning approach as the most sympathetic to his original concept.

If there is to be a new Community Facilities building within the confines of the RE1 zoned oval land, then it should be located in relatively close proximity to the current Gymnasium, providing opportunities for it to be linked into the existing pedestrian spine that runs through the Gymnasium, effectively in anticipation of a further expansion of the building complex. The massing and existing heights of the circulation spine imply that the new Community Facilities building should be two storeys in height.

In this context the removal of the current one storey (3 metre) height restriction over the RE1 land will give the potential for the provision of use and relevant facilities in direct association with the recreational nature of the oval as well as complementing the original architectural concept and heritage values of the heritage listed buildings.

Appropriate design guidelines need to be developed that ensure the potential new facilities building complements the architectural scale, massing and materiality of the existing campus complex/

## **Conclusions**

There are no potential adverse heritage impacts arising from the proposal to amend the permissible use and height of buildings provisions for land zoned RE1 within Part 30 of SEPP Major Developments 2005.

Subject to appropriate design guidelines, there are likely to be no adverse impacts from the potential to erect a two storey Community Facilities building at the south east corner of the oval precinct.

Yours faithfully  
GRAHAM BROOKS AND ASSOCIATES



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