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Building height reduced in Macquarie Park residential development approval

A \$150 million concept plan to provide more than 500 new residential apartments at Macquarie Park, close to transport and employment, has been approved after the NSW Department of Planning reduced the maximum building height by three storeys.

The Department has approved a concept plan containing five residential buildings, up to a maximum of 12 storeys in height, for a 17,000 square metre site on Herring Rd, Macquarie Park. The development will contain up to 550 residential apartments.

The approval is in line with the *Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036*, released in December last year, which supports additional housing and jobs growth close to services and public transport. The site is around 250 metres from Macquarie University railway station, in a highly accessible location.

The Department has also approved two project applications which allow for work to begin on:

- The staged subdivision of the site into five residential and two road allotments;
- Demolition work and construction of Building A, which will contain 123 apartments, ground floor retail space, basement car parking for 152 cars and construction of a new access road.

Future stages of development will be considered through separate development applications, which must be generally consistent with the concept plan approval.

The Department's Deputy Director General Richard Pearson said the concept plan and project applications had only been approved after the Department reduced the maximum building height for the site from the proposed 15 storeys to a maximum of 12 storeys.

"Our assessment of the project found that the maximum height of 15 storeys, proposed for one of the buildings, was excessive and not suitable for the site," Mr Pearson said.

"A reduction in height to 12 storeys will reduce the impact of Building B on adjacent buildings and will improve amenity by increased access to sunlight, and more privacy for surrounding buildings.

"This change has delivered an outcome which is appropriate for the site, and recognises the site's strategic location close to Macquarie University and railway station, and the employment opportunities provided by the Macquarie Park office precinct.

"The height and density of the approved concept plan will provide an appropriate transition between existing urban development and the recently approved development of the the Macquarie University campus."

Mr Pearson said the Metropolitan Plan identified Macquarie Park as an important specialised centre with the Global Economic Corridor.

“The Metropolitan Plan highlights a need to provide 19,000 new jobs in the Macquarie Park specialised centre, to lift capacity from 39,000 jobs in 2006 to 58,000 jobs by 2036,” Mr Pearson said.

“New homes will also be required to support this increase in employment and encourage people to live close to where they work. The Inner North region will need 44,000 new dwellings to be constructed over the 30 years from 2006 to 2036, and this project will help to deliver some of those new dwellings in a well connected location.”

The project will also support around 200 full-time construction jobs, and up to 20 ongoing jobs.

Mr Pearson said as a residential project worth more than \$100 million, the project automatically met the criteria to be assessed by the NSW Department of Planning as a major project under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

The project attracted eight public submissions, and six submissions from government agencies, during a one-month exhibition period.

To manage the impacts of the construction and operation of the development, the Department has imposed a total of 134 conditions on the approval for Building A, while 19 conditions have been applied to the approval of the subdivision works.

The proponent will be required to pay the council around \$1.77 million in Section 94 developer contributions towards local infrastructure for Stage 1. The Department has also imposed a requirement for the proponent to investigate providing a new child care centre on a publicly accessible part of the site, to replace the child care facility which is to be removed.

Mr Pearson said the proponent had also made changes to their original plan, including:

- Modifying setbacks and re-orientating Building D to locate it outside the University Creek vegetation buffer area;
- Relocating the shared public pedestrian/ cycleway to link it to Macquarie University;
- Increasing building separation by re-orientating buildings;
- Committing to achieving a four-star Green Star Rating for the development; and
- Committing to an on-site planting strategy to achieve a net increase in the number of trees and shrubs on the site.

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