

Monday, 19 March 2012

\$125 million educational building approved for Sydney

The NSW Government has approved a landmark new \$125 million educational building, designed by Pritzker Architecture Prize winning architect Frank Gehry for the University of Technology Sydney campus in Ultimo.

Based in Los Angeles, Mr Gehry is famous for designing many major projects including the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum in Spain, the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and the Dancing House in Prague.

The 12-storey building will be the latest addition to the UTS city campus and will be located within the broader commercial and educational precinct that includes the headquarters of the ABC and the Powerhouse Museum.

Up to 1,256 students and 326 academic staff will study and work in the building once completed.

The project was approved by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure after a comprehensive exhibition and consultation process, and rigorous assessment, which included working closely with the City of Sydney Council,

Deputy Director-General Richard Pearson said the department was satisfied the new building would provide a new educational facility of the highest design standards.

“The department’s assessment concluded that the design and scale of the building is appropriate for the campus and demonstrates design excellence, making it likely to become an iconic building in the Ultimo-Pyrmont area,” Mr Pearson said.

“The approval of this project is also consistent with the implementation of the University’s Campus Masterplan.”

Other key features of the approved project include:

- Construction of a \$1 million pedestrian link connecting the site to the Ultimo Pedestrian Network;
- Provision of 177 bicycle parking spaces for staff and students to encourage sustainable transport use;
- Installation of CCTV along Omnibus Lane and 24-hour security patrols around the perimeter of the site to improve safety and security; and
- Installation of a gas-fired tri-generation plant enabling the building to generate its own power and achieve a five-star energy rating.

“The building has been designed to facilitate the expansion of the Ultimo Pedestrian Network which, when finalised, will provide a direct pedestrian and bicycle connection to Darling Harbour, Railway Square and the City of Sydney’s cycle network,” Mr Pearson said.

“By concentrating activities within an established educational precinct, it will also contribute to the development of Pyrmont-Ultimo as a business location for information technology, communications and media endeavours.”

The proposal was publicly exhibited for 30 days during 2011, attracting only two public submissions.

UTS is also working on a memorandum of understanding with the NSW Government’s Koori Job Ready program to promote jobs, training and educational opportunities for indigenous people as part of the \$1 billion campus masterplan redevelopment.

To date, 34 job and training opportunities have already been identified for indigenous people on the new 12-storey building.

The department’s assessment report and conditions of approval for the project are available on the department’s website at <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au>

Media contact: Brendan Berecny, (02) 9228 6257