

CONFIDENTIAL

# THE PANEL'S ADVICE

NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Block 12 Section 33 Reid and Block 12 Section 3 Parkes – First Session  
UNSW Canberra City



Australian Government  
National Capital Authority



**ACT**  
Government

# NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

## THE PANEL'S ADVICE

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Date issued: Thursday 23 April 2020

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Project: UNSW Canberra City

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Review date: Thursday 2 April 2020

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Meeting location: Remote session

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Site visit: No site inspection to occur due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

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Panel members: Catherine Townsend, Chair

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Andrew Smith, Co-Chair

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Proponent: University of New South Wales (UNSW)

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Observers: Representatives from the:  
Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)  
City Renewal Authority (CRA)  
National Capital Authority (NCA)

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Conflicts of interest: None

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## MEETING SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

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Property address: 37 Constitution Ave, Reid (Block 12 Section 33 Reid and Block 12 Section 3 Parkes)

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**Proposal:** The subject site includes two areas bisected by Constitution Avenue: the Canberra Institute of Technology Reid Campus (CIT) to the north (Block 12 Section 33 Reid); and the temporary gravel surface car park to the south (Block 12 Block 12 Section 3 Parkes). The site is within a Designated Area under the National Capital Plan and therefore subject to Works Approval by the National Capital Authority (NCA).

To the north the site includes a heritage listed open space originally set aside in 1921 as an easement for a 'City Railway' (never completed). This easement is bounded by Amaroo Street and the 1920s garden suburb of Reid, comprised of predominantly single detached dwellings zoned RZ1: Suburban. Most of Reid, with the exception of the blocks opposite the site, is heritage listed. The site is bounded to the west by Coranderrk Street, a dual carriage roadway, Glebe Park, the National Convention Centre and the Civic Centre major shopping centre. Block 12 Section 3 Parkes is bounded to the south by the Parkes Way arterial road, in proximity of a public pedestrian underpass to Commonwealth Park on the Lake Burley Griffin foreshore. To the east of the site is the heritage listed St John's Anglican Church, graveyard and grounds and the recent Jamison Apartments development on Constitution Avenue.

The overall site has an area of approximately 104,127m<sup>2</sup>. It is generally orthogonal (conforming to the alignment of the Reid subdivisions); irregularly shaped along the southern boundary (conforming to the curve of the Parkes Way/Coranderrk Street intersection); with the eastern boundary (as defined under the Deed) presenting a staggered line from north to south. The CIT campus has an area of 71,493m<sup>2</sup>. The campus buildings are distributed across the site separated by landscaped spaces only some of which are formal. The CIT will continue its current operations until its new Woden campus is completed. The Block 12 Section 3 has an area of 32,634m<sup>2</sup>.

The railway easement features substantial mature trees planted in rows in the 1940s. Constitution Avenue bisecting the site is a significant formal landscaped avenue that forms the Municipal Axis of the Griffin' National Triangle and serving to connect City Hill with Russell. The easement offers a unique landscape opportunity for development of the site.

The proposal is for a new urban university campus for UNSW, to be delivered in four stages over a 15 year period. The campus will support internationally focused educational programs, the Defence and Security Research and Innovation Precinct, the expansion of existing education and research programs as well as providing high quality residential, recreational and retail facilities. The new campus development will provide strong transport connections, high standards of sustainable development and a robust, integrated public and green space network.

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Proponents' representative address to the panel:

The proponent's design team commenced the presentation by outlining the site context and highlighting the significance of the location as part of the municipal axis of the National Triangle.

The design team noted their intention to develop the site in four stages over a 15 year period, recognising that the CIT will continue to operate on the site until their new campus is completed in Woden.

The proponent described their consultation and forward timeline, noting that they are seeking input from the ACT Government (including the NCDRP) and the community. Community consultation has been adapted to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 by lengthening the online submission timeframes.

The design team articulated the policies and principles that have informed the design, noting that the NCA precinct plan will be a significant driver for the UNSW Campus master planning. The design team described the 'emotional brief' informing the master planning, namely: the principles of 'Big Country' (i.e. indigenous history and cultural heritage), 'Bush Capital' (i.e. bush landscape setting, incorporation of biodiversity) and 'Home of Education and Innovation' (i.e. on-site student accommodation and innovation incubators). The design team noted that the site has several influences requiring specific response including varying urban scales and development intensities, formal and natural landscapes, and Canberra's 'grand gestures' observable in the city's planning and urban fabric.

The design team described the campus as being at the edge of the 'Parliamentary Triangle'<sup>1</sup> framed by mountains and bisected by Constitution Avenue. Proximity to the Russell Defence offices to the east was highlighted as a historical educational connection to be continued within the new UNSW campus's, particularly for research.

The design team noted their intention to provide an integrated, publicly accessible and welcoming campus that incorporates shared facilities between students and the broader community. The likely connection to a future extension of the ACT's light rail network was envisaged as a future 'University Line' connecting Canberra's tertiary education institutions along an approximately east-west axis running from Belconnen to the Canberra Airport.

The design team noted the requirement for onsite car parking and their preference to consolidate the required 750 publicly accessible car parking spaces within a minimum number of parking structures, ideally utilising the natural fall of the land (approx. one storey from Constitution Avenue to Parkes Way) to integrate the parking below ground where possible and sleeving the above-ground structure with active frontages/uses.

The design team identified key elements within the existing public open space network in Reid, that have informed the alignment of their proposed linear green space north-south 'extensions', including existing CIT green spaces and their potential within the new campus.

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<sup>1</sup> Corrected as meaning within the National Triangle

Proposed campus movement network were described as having varying bespoke landscape spaces with 24/7 public connections through the site and a vibrant core at the intersection of primary pedestrian paths.

Sustainability was presented as a significant consideration intended to achieve a minimum 5-star Green Star 'As built' and a minimum 4.5 NABERS accreditation for the development.

The design team made comparative references to the Australian National University (ANU) built form, commenting that the ANU 'disciplinary citadels' are unwelcoming to the public with buildings that do not outwardly indicate their use. The proponent presented their proposed typical building section, noting that they aimed to showcase academic activity at the ground plane, with more private or secure programming within higher levels (i.e. a vertical gradient of public to private in building programming). In comparison to the ANU generally consistent architectural language and materiality, the proponent proposes to provide a strong, unifying urban framework that will enable a varied architectural expression and character within its Reid campus. The cohesive character of the campus is intended to be supported by place making with the buildings expressed as part of the city rather than only campus centric.

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**Recommendation:** Based on the documentation provided prior to the design review panel session, investigation of the site by individual panellists (in person and virtual) and the proponents presentation, the following comments and recommendations are provided:

The Panel is pleased that the development proposal has been presented to NCDRP at this early design concept stage. Engaging early with the Panel has provided the opportunity for a meaningful discussion about the key elements of the proposal and an opportunity to identify how the design concepts could be further enhanced for the benefit of UNSW, future students and importantly the broader Canberra community.

The Panel considers the proposal to be an exciting proposition for Canberra that has the potential to contribute significantly to the city and national capital. The Panel considers that to achieve design excellence in master planning the proposal must carefully consider and respond to the site and its complex and sensitive context, serving as a connection and mediator between the formal elements of the National Triangle and surrounding significant parklands, the suburban garden character of the suburb of Reid, and the highly urban Canberra City Centre.

The Panel supports the proponent's intention to provide a diverse, welcoming campus. However, the Panel observed that the proponent must seek to resolve and demonstrate how any potential conflicts between a Defence curriculum and associated security would meld successfully with the need for a highly permeable, open and inviting campus environment within an activated and innovative 24/7 precinct.

To aid in future design review, the Panel requests that the proponent provide details of the proposed campus character with site sectional analysis including the relationship of the site to Parkes Way, Commonwealth Park, Constitution Avenue and adjoining streets and spaces. Additional information is requested about the strategy response to movement

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networks (including pedestrian and vehicular); potential for adaptive reuse of existing buildings; and any security intentions/measures.

The Panel supports the proposal for a diverse, engaging UNSW campus for the site and encourages the proponent to address the key issues and recommendations outlined in the next design iteration of this proposal.

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Key Issues and Recommendations

The *Key Issues and Recommendations* provide detail advice to the proponent, consistent with the above recommendation.

To achieve the best possible design outcome for the proposal, the proponent is encouraged to consider the following issues through the next stages of the design development:

**1.0 Context and character**

- 1.1 The Panel acknowledges the proponent's intention to reflect the 'Bush Capital' principle within the UNSW campus master plan design. The Panel however notes that the 'Bush Capital' represents the broad context for Canberra and that the site is located within a highly urbanised area for which a bushland landscape treatment may be incongruent. The Panel encourages the proponent to consider how the proposal can more appropriately reflect the formal landscape character (i.e. a Garden City character) and city urban context that surrounds the site.
- 1.2 The Panel notes the challenges presented by the site in providing an appropriate contextual response, as each boundary presents a varying character requiring careful consideration including: the railway easement and Reid garden suburb to the north; the formal National Capital character to the south; the Corranderrk/Constitution Avenue corner; Canberra City's urban form to the west; and the mixed character of St Johns Anglican Church, Anzac Parade and Russell (i.e. Defence) to the east ; and the Parkes Way frontage and Commonwealth Park connections. The Panel encourages the proponent to consider how the master plan may best respond to these varying interfaces in relation to building scale, expression and materiality, and in terms of the connections to various movement networks.
- 1.3 The Panel notes that the site is situated at the juncture of Walter Burley Griffin's orthogonal planning of Reid with the radial planning of the City Centre. The Panel encourages the proponent to consider how the site planning can provide a unifying gesture to these elements of the urban fabric. The Panel also encourages consideration of how the campus proposal may best respond to the diagonal alignment of the St Johns Anglican Church and associated grounds.
- 1.4 Whilst understanding the complexity of developing a campus on two discrete parcels of land separated by a major avenue, the Panel seeks more planning/design detail regarding the intended relationship (or otherwise) between the blocks including for academic requirements, student/staff experience/use, access, streetscape and activation (Refer also to 7.2).
- 1.5 The Panel considers that contextual planning should also consider the merits of extending Euree Street and its strong landscape character through to Constitution Avenue (Refer also to 6.1).

**2.0 Landscape**

- 2.1 The Panel considers that the inclusion of visual landscape 'fingers' through the campus should be considered to ensure that the campus
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and nearby parkland (i.e. railway easement, Commonwealth Park, Glebe Park) are thoroughly integrated.

- 2.2 The Panel notes there is significant opportunity for the proposed campus to act as a unifying element that links urban green space and movement networks, connecting the railway easement, Glebe Park, the City Centre, Commonwealth Park and the Parliamentary Zone. The Panel encourages the proponent to consider how these connections may be achieved in a master planning context.
- 2.3 The Panel notes the opportunity for the railway heritage easement to become a permeable, active and inviting space that provides additional entry points into the campus. Acknowledging that the easement is currently used as if it were public open space and the heritage management requirements, the Panel encourages the proponent to work with a suitably qualified heritage consultant to explore this opportunity to provide greater permeability and amenity to the site.

### **3.0 Sustainability**

- 3.1 The Panel considers that there is opportunity to adapt existing assets that are located on the site for re-use in early stages of the campus development, noting that the existing buildings and spaces have substantial embodied energy quotient that could be retained unless there is a compelling reason for their immediate removal. To support a potential program of adaptive re-use, the Panel recommends that the proponent develop an 'asset register' that describes the existing buildings and spaces and their potential for reuse, for instance as low-cost tenancies within an innovation/start-up precinct within the campus.

### **4.0 Density and connectivity**

- 4.1 The Panel encourages the proponent to consider how the proposal could respond to and integrate with a future light rail station (or similar public transport destination) along Constitution Avenue. The Panel notes that a light rail station in this location is a very long-term proposition for the site.
- 4.2 The Panel requests that the proponent provides details regarding the anticipated vehicle and pedestrian circulation throughout the site.
- 4.3 In order to understand the impact of the proposal on surrounding movement networks, the Panel requests traffic modelling be provided for the next design review session.
- 4.4 The Panel encourages the proponent to explore the possibility of regrading the laneway off Corranderrk Street to the site (adjacent to the railway easement) to encourage better connectivity and active engagement with the campus and railway easement and potentially of the proposed structured car park in this location. Utilising the laneway for only service access may limit its potential within the overall scheme.

### **5.0 Built form and scale**

- 5.1 The Panel encourages the proponent to consider alternatives to the Le Corbusier styled building programming (i.e. stratification of uses) that
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places active uses on the ground plane while 'holding up' the remaining programming. The Panel encourages the proponent to ensure that various uses have both physical and visual connections to ensure a diverse, vibrant campus that fosters interaction in keeping with innovation objectives for the campus. A clear suite of strategies are requested that demonstrate how the precinct and its ground levels will promote accessibility, activation and public safety for all users at various times of the day, evening and night.

## **6.0 Functionality and build quality**

- 6.1 The Panel considers that the allocation of part of the site to the ACT Government requires further investigation to determine optimal placement within the overall site boundary. The Panel notes that the current siting does not correspond to the existing buildings on site limiting potential for UNSW to retain these elements, nor does it relate to the surrounding street network (i.e. the alignment of Euree Street). The Panel recommends that the proponent engage further with the ACT Government to test options for the land to be retained. As part of further engagement, the Panel also encourages the proponent to explore an extension of Euree Street to Constitution Avenue, noting that this would provide a strong axial element to the campus and serve to provide a logical separation between the campus and the ACT Government retained land.

## **7.0 Legibility and safety**

- 7.1 The Panel is concerned that the current proposal presents as having a 'front door' to Constitution Avenue and a 'back door' along the eastern boundary, with the latter providing reduced amenity to the proposal. The Panel encourages the proponent to consider how the proposal could instead provide two front doors with varying characters and eliminate the impression of a back-of-house or 'back door' at the eastern site edge.
- 7.2 The Panel observes that the proposed campus is bisected by Constitution Avenue. The Panel requests details regarding the treatment of these interfaces, noting that the success of the campus will depend in part on the unification of the north and south sections. The Panel also identifies the importance of enabling a transition with and connection to Commonwealth Park and other key areas within the National Triangle.

## **8.0 Diversity and amenity**

- 8.1 The Panel is concerned with the compatibility of a Defence curriculum with associated security requirements, noting that these requirements may run contrary to other principles aspired to within the proposal (i.e. 'openness' that is key to a successful innovation precinct). The Panel queries the ramifications of providing secure areas within the proposed campus for the purposes of Defence-related research, education, training and collaboration, noting that providing secure areas with associated measures (e.g. CCTV surveillance cameras, secure gates, fencing) may have adverse impacts on pedestrian access and permeability throughout the site, and may also adversely impact perceptions of the campus for users and visitors. In order to understand the impact of proposed measures, the Panel requests
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further details regarding the location and treatment of secure spaces within the proposal.

### **9.0 Community and public domain**

- 9.1 The Panel supports the intention to deliver a rich student life and active campus through shared retail and other facilities with the broader Canberra community. For the next design review session, the Panel requests that the proponent provides details regarding the proposed shared facilities, such as identification of anticipated delivery partners (e.g. WeWork), proposed ownership, ongoing management and access arrangements and proposed location(s) within the campus.
- 9.2 The proposal should establish an integrated response to potentially disparate green links and spaces including Glebe Park, the heritage rail corridor and the existing pedestrian overpass. The Panel requests the proponent to develop a clear suite of strategies that reconcile these potential physical and visual connections to promote a wider integrated public domain extending the green amenity of Commonwealth Park into the urban fabric. These strategies should consider green space and public access, as well as opportunities to contribute to a leading water management narrative that harnesses local topography and its waterway network.

### **10.0 Visual appearance**

- 10.1 The Panel supports the proponent's intention to develop a strong urban form and planning framework that facilitates cohesion within the campus precinct but also enables a range of architectural expression for campus buildings, while ensuring coherency appropriate to the central Canberra location.
- 10.2 The site presents key opportunities to define a positive future urban interface to Parkes Way. The Panel requests additional details regarding how the proposal will engage with this key vehicle route and promote a positive relationship between urban areas and Commonwealth Park.

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Addendum by  
panellist Ken  
Maher AO

This section is provided as an addendum to the Panel's Advice above, provided by panellist Ken Maher AO who was an apology for the session. The following advice is offered with the acknowledgement that the proponent did not have the opportunity to respond to these specific points, and that the Panel looks forward to engaging with the proponent to further explore these points in further sessions for this proposal.

### **2.0 Landscape**

- 2.4 The Panel notes the opportunity to harness the existing established landscape to help to create a sense of place and inform the open space network within the public domain.
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**4.0 Density and connectivity**

4.5 The Panel notes the need for careful integration of car parking to avoid adverse impacts on levels within the public domain, and to ensure that there is sufficient provision of deep soil planting.

**6.0 Functionality and build quality**

6.2 The Panel supports the concept of each stage having a sense of completeness. The Panel considers that this will need the preparation of a detailed implementation plan to be successfully delivered.

6.3 The Panel recommends the preparation of detailed design guidelines that apply through the stages of the masterplan and project implementation to deliver design excellence for architecture and public domain. While recognising it is not yet fully relevant, it will be important to ensure procurement delivers design excellence.

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Block 12 Section 33 Reid and Block 12 Section 3 Parkes – Second Session  
UNSW Canberra City Campus



**Australian Government**  
**National Capital Authority**



**ACT**  
Government

# NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

## THE PANEL'S ADVICE

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Date issued: Wednesday 26 August 2020

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Project: UNSW Canberra City Campus

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Review dates: Wednesday 12 August 2020, Second Session  
Thursday 2 April 2020, First Session

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Meeting location: Meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams

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Site visit: No site inspection to occur due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

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Panel members: Catherine Townsend, Chair

Andrew Smith, Co-Chair



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Proponent: University of New South Wales (UNSW)

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Observers: Representatives from the:  
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City Renewal Authority (CRA)  
National Capital Authority (NCA)

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Conflicts of interest: Annabelle Pegrum declared that she had received a flyer at her home address regarding community engagement for the proposal, however she confirmed that she had not participated in the consultation nor have any family members.

Ken Maher declared himself as an Honorary Professor at UNSW, member of UNSW Design Excellence Review Panel and member on the CRA board.

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Confidentiality of  
the Panel's Advice:

Design review considers concept proposals at various stages throughout the design process that are frequently subject to change and improvement in relation to feedback from the NCDRP. Throughout this time a commercial in confidence status is maintained for proposals that engage with the NCDRP.

In accordance with Section 139 of the Planning and Development Act (2007) (the Act), prescribed development proposals are required to provide a copy of the 'Panel's Advice' and the proponent's 'Response to the Panels Advice' in writing when the Development Application when is submitted. Section 30 of the Act identifies the design advice and the proponent's written response to that advice as associated documents, therefore the most recent Panel's Advice and the proponent's response become publicly available once a Development Application is publicly notified for community comment.

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## MEETING SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

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To the north the site includes a heritage listed open space originally set aside in 1921 as an easement for a 'City Railway' (never completed). This easement is bounded by Amaroo Street and the 1920s garden suburb of Reid, comprised of predominantly single detached dwellings zoned RZ1: Suburban. Most of Reid, with the exception of the blocks opposite the site, is heritage listed. The site is bounded to the west by Coranderrk Street, a dual carriage roadway, Glebe Park, the National Convention Centre and the Civic Centre major shopping centre. Block 12 Section 3 Parkes is bounded to the south by the Parkes Way arterial road, in proximity of a public pedestrian underpass to Commonwealth Park on the Lake Burley Griffin foreshore. To the east of the site is the heritage listed St John's Anglican Church, graveyard and grounds and the recent Jamison Apartments development on Constitution Avenue.

The overall site has an area of approximately 104,127m<sup>2</sup>. It is generally orthogonal (conforming to the alignment of the Reid subdivisions); irregularly shaped along the southern boundary (conforming to the curve of the Parkes Way/Coranderrk Street intersection); with the eastern boundary (as defined under the Deed) presenting a staggered line from north to south. The existing Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) campus has an area of 71,493m<sup>2</sup>. The campus buildings are distributed across the site separated by landscaped spaces only some of which are formal. The CIT will continue its current operations until its new Woden campus is completed. The Block 12 Section 3 has an area of 32,634m<sup>2</sup>.

The railway easement features substantial mature trees planted in rows in the 1940s. Constitution Avenue bisecting the site is a significant formal landscaped avenue that forms the Municipal Axis of the Griffin National Triangle and serving to connect City Hill with Russell. The railway easement offers a unique landscape opportunity for development of the site.

The proposal is for a new urban university campus for University of NSW (UNSW), to be delivered in four stages over a 15 year period. The campus will support internationally focused educational programs, the Defence and Security Research and Innovation Precinct, the expansion of existing education and research programs as well as providing high quality residential, recreational and retail facilities. The new campus development

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will provide strong transport connections, high standards of sustainable development and a robust, integrated public and green space network.

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Proponents' representative address to the panel:

The proponent's representative from UNSW, Michael Frater, commenced the presentation by explaining the expected function of the Campus Master Plan for UNSW. The proponent noted that the whilst the Master Plan includes 'ambitions' it must also provide a level of certainty for the proposed development outcomes. The Master Plan 'proposed outcomes' would be ensured through the provision of design guidelines prescribing the location of key items including the campus core, primary roads and thoroughfares and pedestrian walkways and public open space areas. The design guidelines would also nominate the size and scale of development, interfaces between built forms and open space outcomes. He noted that the design guidelines would be prepared in alignment with key planning controls and that the delivery of the Master Plan is on-track, notwithstanding the various financial and academic impacts of COVID-19 on the University.

The proponent's representative from MGS Architects, Vanessa Mooney, summarised the key issues from the previous design review session as 'connecting' and 'connectivity', how the Master Plan would create place/s within the community and its broader context, articulation of a clear identity for the campus, opportunities for shared use, positioning of car parking and its integrated with development and gateways, implementation and staging (i.e. each stage needs a sense of completeness) and the creation of a cohesive campus that straddles the two sites across Constitution Avenue.

The proponent affirmed that the ambitions for the Master Plan would be supported by design principles, strategies and guidelines. Highlighted considerations outlined included the intention to create a sense of place and home for residents, delivery of a world-class campus, connection to context, reflecting climate and seasonality within the built forms and open spaces and enabling safety. The proponent noted that the design principles for the proposal have been broadly organised under the categories of 'lively precinct', 'complete campus', 'unifying gesture', and a 'campus which is comfortable'.

In order to meet the spatial requirements of the UNSW design brief, the proponent commented that the response proposes a dense, urban campus that seeks to provide 'this piece of Canberra with a rich, urban and diverse experience'. In addition to being well-connected to adjoining areas, the proposal was also described to include connections to key views/vistas (notably to Lake Burley Griffin, Parliament House, Black Mountain, Glebe Park, the adjoining heritage easement, internal campus outdoor space and street views) and to provide sensitive interfaces particularly to the north heritage easement and the suburb of Reid.

The proponent noted that maximising solar access to the open space areas is a key consideration with the proposed built form orientated around active space on the ground plane. The main pedestrian walks were described as

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providing an 'armature' for the campus, with the pedestrian network being comprised of a series of activated and vibrant spaces.

The ground plane plan was described as incorporating a suite of elements including key entries to the campus, connections to the pedestrian network and links to open space areas. The proponent noted the intention to retain the existing library and courtyard as these were considered valuable to 'ground the experience' and culture of the campus to its past and redevelopment future.

The proposed campus landscape plan was presented as a diverse array of spaces with different characters that would also satisfy the ACT Government's aspirations for 30% tree canopy coverage. As part of the landscape proposition, the proponent noted that the northern heritage easement will serve to provide a 'visual foil' and physical buffer to the adjacent residential development in Reid and will provide spaces for contemplation and reflection for campus users. The far southern easement adjacent to Parkes Way was also presented as a buffer space that would feature an organic, less formal landscape treatment as a transitional element to the character of the surrounding landscape.

In relation to the varying and complex topography of the site, the proponent advised that the proposal seeks to mediate levels at the various edges of the campus while using level changes to create unique spaces within the overall campus. The topographic variation was also noted to create opportunities for partially or fully below grade car parking.

The proponent concluded the presentation by summarising the proposed internal precincts and their associated characters (illustrated with a number of supporting sections), and the proposed staging for campus development designed to ensure that each stage when built would have a sense of completeness in its own right within the campus.

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**Recommendation:** Based on the documentation provided prior to the design review panel session; and the proponents presentation, the following comments and recommendations are provided:

The Panel appreciates the willingness with which the proponent team has engaged with the design review process and notes the complexity regarding the program, site context and topography. The proponent is commended for the substantial amount of work completed since the last design review session and for the comprehensive response to the previous Panel's Advice.

The Panel however remains concerned that the proposal does not sufficiently integrate with its broader city context. The Panel is not convinced that the proposed orthogonal grid overlaying the site achieves sensitive connections to the adjacent context and suggests that the geometry and spatial organisation could be loosened or further developed to enable more nuanced design outcomes, particularly in response to the existing edge interfaces.

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Constitution Avenue was noted by the Panel for its significance and emerging, highly pedestrianised character. The Panel remains unclear regarding the proponent's vision for the avenue and how a high quality urban design outcome will be achieved in response to its important and symbolic role for this proposal and within the broader national and city context. The Panel recommends that greater articulation in building setbacks be introduced along the avenue rather than continuous edge as currently envisaged, so as to support legibility for primary address, destination stopping points/entrances and to promote solar and visual access opportunities. Noting the strength of the existing design character, the Panel requests that the proponent develops a clear vision for Constitution Avenue and encourages exploration of the inclusion of diverse typologies and spatial outcomes to achieve a key 'address' for the campus and an intimate street condition.

The Panel highlighted that further development of the campus' structure, particularly regarding spatial hierarchy and modulation should be a focus for further development as the design progresses. Amenity (i.e. solar access, protection from wind) and legibility (i.e. the location of the heart, the entrance etc) should inform design development to enhance public domain outcomes.

Distribution of massing across the site was considered by the Panel to present a level of density that is not balanced against demonstrable building and open space amenity outcomes. The Panel further noted that the proposed building heights do not appear to have been tested in this regard. As such, the Panel requests that massing studies be undertaken to test the distribution and impacts of density and building heights, corresponding with the recommended campus framework structure revisions. The opportunity to include signature buildings in the campus design (potentially for critical corners) should also be considered and evident in the massing assessment. The massing assessment should also demonstrate the implications for the amenity of the associated proposed open spaces. The Panel was concerned that many would be in shadow for long periods of time in winter with negative wind conditions.

The Panel appreciates that the landscape design is imbued in the development of the campus' precinct characters and looks forward to seeing further details regarding how the landscape offering is developed to support legibility of these spaces as well as sustainability objectives.

The Panel notes the importance of a robust and enduring Master Plan framework that will ensure the delivery of the vision for the campus, yet will enable flexibly where and when required. The Panel recommends that as the Master Plan document is refined that it provides clarity between mandatory and discretionary provisions and includes supporting illustrative proposals. The Panel also anticipates further information in future sessions in relation to what key elements of the plan would be enshrined in 'controls' within the overarching master planning framework that would underpin long-term delivery of campus as envisaged.

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The Panel notes the car parking that is proposed for the development at this stage and commends the proponent for skinning or submerging car parking to reduce visual impacts wherever possible. The Panel however recommends that the proponent develops a car parking strategy that is agile and that can adapt to potential reduced requirements in the future and that addresses the spread of utilisation of parking spaces across different user groups that access the campus. This may also influence the development staging proposed.

Critical traffic and waste management requirements and strategies remain unclear with the Panel concerned that the indicative intentions may be undeliverable in practice. The proponent is encouraged to engage with the NCA to inform and further develop these responses.

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Key Issues and Recommendations

The *Key Issues and Recommendations* provide detail advice to the proponent, consistent with the above recommendation.

To achieve the best possible design outcome for the proposal, the proponent is encouraged to consider the following issues through the next stages of the design development. The Panel looks forward to the proponent's design responses for discussion at the next review session.

**1.0 Context and character**

1.1 The Panel considers that the engagement and integration of this proposal with the broader city context to be vitally important, however it remains concerned that the proposal as presented does not adequately do so at this stage. The Panel particularly notes that each site edge/frontage of the proposal requires a sensitive response to its adjacent context and recommends that the associated built form/massing be further developed with conviction to enable the achievement of the expected excellent design outcomes in this important part of the city. The Panel requests that the proponent considers the following:

1.1.1 The Panel sees the opportunity for the Coranderrk Street interface to be a highly permeable and activated edge that is responsive to the unique 'city edge' character. The Panel is concerned that the proposed built form, particularly at the ground plane, coupled with the landscape proposal limits opportunities to facilitate this outcome. The Panel therefore recommends that the proponent revisits the design outcomes for this interface and explores how a highly activated, modulated and permeable frontage will be achieved. The Panel also requests that the proponent further develops the connection between the proposed campus and Glebe Park.

1.1.2 The Panel is not convinced that the proposal appropriately responds to the heritage railway easement and suburb of Reid beyond. The Panel questions whether longer frontage building forms that overlooks the parkland (and potentially connect to it by bridges/pathways sensitive to the west-east gradient

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changes) would provide a better outcome than the short-ended buildings interfacing this edge currently proposed. The Panel strongly encourages the proponent to robustly engage with ACT Heritage to better understand the key elements of heritage significance for the easement and the opportunities to develop design enhancement strategies to celebrate and convey its cultural value to future users. In so doing, the Panel suggests that the proponent looks to Canberra precedents such as the development of York Park in Barton and similar small yet significant landscapes in other States. The Panel looks forward to seeing further development of this interface particularly regarding positive and sensitive engagement that celebrates the heritage context.

1.1.3 The Panel is concerned that the proposed service lane running parallel to Parkes Way could entrench a vehicular character to this frontage. The Panel notes that if the road is used as a waste collection route, that the visual impacts presented by waste trucks, stores and service areas would not be supported. The Panel is also not convinced that these impacts would be effectively mitigated by the proposed landscaping. The Panel requests that the proponent clarifies the character of the proposed road or reconsiders the placement and extent of this road along this frontage.

1.1.4 Noting the predicted delivery timeline for this proposal, the Panel strongly encourages the proponent to seek further information regarding the future intentions for the adjoining 'City Renewal Authority Site' adjacent to the eastern corner of the campus site. The Panel sees opportunity for the two projects to develop corresponding design strategies that would ensure that the public domain outcomes between these development interfaces are seamlessly integrated, befitting of the high quality urban design outcomes anticipated for this proposal and surrounding developments. The Panel understands that the CRA would welcome such collaborative engagement.

1.2 Noting the emerging character of Constitution Avenue promotes slowed vehicle speeds and a pedestrianised street condition, the Panel considers that this character should demonstrably influence the public domain outcomes along the two associated frontages for the campus. Master planning to date does not yet clarify design intent to a sufficient level to convince the Panel that the avenue, the community, or the campus, will be enhanced by development of this significant frontage. The Panel recommends further design development for the both Constitution Avenue frontages, ensuring it is commensurate with the intended pedestrianised character, particularly with regard to:

1.2.1 Legibility, hierarchy, diversity and public domain outcomes along Constitution Avenue. The Panel does not support the proposal nominating all buildings to the same setback. The

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Panel strongly suggests that the proponent sensitively test building setbacks, form, ground plane uses and landscape treatments to provide variation and permeability along the avenue that is responsive to solar amenity outcomes (particularly to the southern side of the road where good solar access is achievable), stopping/drop-off points, promote legibility and hierarchy for address/entry points and key pedestrian routes, access points to main gathering areas, and increased visual interest. The Panel also sees opportunities to offer diverse typologies along these frontages to offer an intimate streetscape.

1.2.2 The proposed parallel building frontages along Constitution Avenue which could be perceived as defensive and potentially emphasising separation of the northern and southern blocks rather than reinforcing a connected relationship. The Panel also notes the opportunity to directly open areas of green space or gathering spaces on to Constitution Avenue. The Panel questions the rigour of the orthogonal geometry throughout the proposal and sees opportunities in loosening this arrangement and further developing the spatial hierarchy (i.e. spaces between buildings) and variation to the geometry, particularly on the ground plane along the Constitution Avenue interface.

1.3 The prominence of the site from aspects within its broader context. The Panel suggests that the proponent explores the opportunity to include signature/landmark buildings that are responsive to key views upon the site. The Panel also notes the future intention for the existing roundabout at the corner of Coranderrk Street and Parkes Way to be replaced by a signalised intersection. Pursuant to future traffic conditions, the Panel flags the lower western corner as an ideal location for a signature building.

## **2.0 Landscape**

2.1 The Panel acknowledges the early stages of the landscape design and is encouraged by the initial aspirations presented. The Panel requires further details regarding the provision of deep root planting zones and ground surface treatments, particularly in response to the developing characters of the precincts throughout the campus.

2.2 The Panel also requires further development of the differentiation in the landscape response for each frontage (i.e. the city edge, the

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formality and cadence of Constitution Avenue, the parkland presentation and higher vehicle speeds of Parkes Way).

- 2.3 The Panel is not convinced that the landscaped open spaces will have an amenity that will encourage or enable use in the way intended in the vision for the campus (Refer recommendation 3.0)
- 2.4 The Panel encourages the landscape framework to provide controls guiding the location of green roofs, integrated with the strategy for solar panels and the comment on roof terraces in sections 7.3 and 9.1 below.

### **3.0 Density and connectivity**

- 3.1 The Panel notes that proposed density appears to overburden the site and creates poor building and outdoor amenity outcomes - particularly where buildings are sited with minimal separation along an east-west axis subjecting the outdoor areas to poor solar access and potential wind impacts. The Panel requests that the proponent further explores the distribution of density (footprint and height) across the site with massing studies and provides the Floor Space Ratio (FSR).
- 3.2 Figure ground diagrams for each of these studies would be most useful in understanding the built form to open space implications.

### **4.0 Built form and scale**

- 4.1 The Panel is concerned that building heights across the campus design appear to be at the consistent maximum 25 metres above natural ground level. The Panel suggests that the proponent has not sufficiently explored the distribution of building heights across the campus in response to contextual relationships, attractive skyline opportunities or internal amenity outcomes (e.g. solar access). The Panel requests that the proponent provides explorations of building height distribution options with associated development impacts.

### **5.0 Functionality and build quality**

- 5.1 The acknowledges the developing stage of the Master Plan document and notes that the Master Plan document requires a clarity of structure and content. The Panel requests that as the document is refined, that the proponent develops clear and absolute development controls including built form envelopes, a robust public domain framework and sustainability performance requirements (e.g. enduring principles for primary roads, pathways, entry points, key open space areas, the campus 'heart', building development sites, built form envelopes, etc). It is recommended that these items should then be supported by discretionary design guidelines, and the Master Plan can be illustrated through indicative design proposals.
  - 5.2 The Panel appreciates many of the aspirations proposed for the Master Plan document and expects the resolution of a robust planning and design framework with controls to assure delivery of the campus
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vision. The Panel recognises that elements within the campus plan may be discretionary in response to future needs (i.e. car park locations) and requests further explanation of the functionality and operational management of the Master Plan in response to delivery of enduring versus discretionary elements.

- 5.3 The Panel is not yet clear how the proponent intends to manage traffic, waste and other servicing requirements for the campus. The Panel notes these strategies are integral to the design outcomes for the campus and anticipates that the proponent will engage with the NCA to inform their further development. The Panel therefore requests further information regarding the outcomes for these considerations.
- 5.4 The Panel acknowledges the number of required car parks for this proposal and appreciates that such car parking is proposed in basements or 'skinned' with other uses at ground plane to reduce visual impacts and inactive frontages. The Panel does however encourage the proponent to adopt an agile approach and recommends flexible design and staging options are considered should car parking requirements be reduced in the future (e.g. provisions for adaptive reuse of structures or staged use of surface car parks on the northern site for developments on the southern site.).
- 5.5 In relation to the quantity of required car parks the Panel suggests that the parking strategy should reflect the availability of spaces to different user groups accessing the campus across different times of the day/night.

## **6.0 Legibility and safety**

- 6.1 The Panel is concerned that the campus does not offer a clear 'address' or 'entrance/s'. Whilst the Panel acknowledges the arrival points and gateways described by the proponent, the Panel requests further consideration of the hierarchy of 'entrances' and recommends that the campus design provides a clear sense of address and arrival to a key entry point.
  - 6.2 The Panel notes that the inclusion of many 'focus spaces' throughout the campus. The Panel does however request further consideration of a generous centre/s or heart/core equal to the overall scale of this proposal. The Panel notes that further development of the hierarchy of the focus spaces may assist to achieve this outcome.
  - 6.3 Noting the predicted staged completion of this proposal, the Panel remains concerned that the proposal does not demonstrate a sense of completion at each stage and will not offer a heart/core at each stage of completion. The Panel requests further information regarding the campus design outcomes at each stage of completion throughout its delivery.
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## **7.0 Diversity and amenity**

- 7.1 The Panel notes the proposed quantum of student housing included in this proposal and the ambiguity regarding future requirements for the number of on-campus student residents. The Panel sees opportunities to develop adaptive reuse strategies should the requirement for student housing reduce/change in future (e.g. appropriate, floor to ceiling heights, floor plate depths) and looks forward to seeing exploration of how this could be achieved.
- 7.2 The Panel reiterates its concern for the rigidity and uniformity of the orthogonal grid response as proposed. The Panel is very concerned that the spatial organisation within the campus lacks hierarchy and creates ambiguous spaces. The Panel recommends that the proponent further develops a legible hierarchy of space, considers increasing the generosity of the gathering areas and seeks to diversify the spatial outcomes for the campus design - particularly at the ground plane.
- 7.3 The Panel notes the early design stages for the proposal and appreciates the indication of some roof terrace/upper level outdoor areas. The Panel encourages the proponent to further explore the inclusion and diversification of the outdoor space offered.

## **8.0 Community and public domain**

- 8.1 The development of the proposed precinct characters throughout the campus design is appreciated by the Panel. However, the Panel requests that the proponent allocates the types of uses on the ground plane that would support the desired outcomes (i.e. locations for cafés, hospitality, retail, study rooms)
- 8.2 The Panel affirms the importance of excellent design outcomes for the campus streetscapes, frontages and public interfaces and spaces. The Panel notes the shift in character that this development will bring to the existing streets frontages. The Panel is eager to understand the legacy that the streets relevant to this proposal will leave in the Canberra context and requires explorations of street sections at the next design review session.

## **9.0 Visual appearance**

- 9.1 Whilst the Panel strongly encourages the inclusion of solar panels, it is concerned regarding the visual impacts of this application to the proposed roofscape. The proponent should present an integrated design solution for solar panels and other potential mechanical services (e.g. air conditioning condensers, lift overruns) to ensure high quality roofscape design outcome.
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